



I'M REALLY A SUPERSTAR

BOOK 14

Chang Yu

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I'm Really A Superstar

(我真是大明星)

by

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(尝谕)

Synopsis

Zhang Ye was originally a mundane college graduate with aspiring dreams to become a star, but unfortunately has below average looks and height. However one day, he woke up and suddenly found himself in a parallel world!

It's like the same world, but wait a minute...many brands, celebrities and even famous works from his world changed and are gone in this new world!

Armed with the profound literary knowledge of his previous world and a heaven-defying Game Ring that gives him magical items, stats and skills, Zhang Ye embarks on a journey to pursue his life-long dream of becoming famous!

Follow Zhang Ye as he takes the new world by storm, one plagiarized piece at a time, to hilarious reactions!

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Chapter 1201: Those seven spots!

The next day.

It was the annual Mid-Autumn Festival again.

In the morning, Zhang Ye loaded up small and large packages into the car and drove to the studio. Without anyone's help, he carried everything and went upstairs.

All of the staff were present.

"Director Zhang!"

"Boss, what's with all that?"

"Whoa, why are there so many things?"

"Let me help you!"

"Just leave them there."

Everyone quickly came over to help.

He brought over a lot of things, and they weren't exactly cheap either.

There was an entire hamper containing Brain Gold products in it, prepaid gift cards with a value of 1,000 yuan each, mooncakes, and many other goodies.

Zhang Ye opened up a box and said to everyone with a smile, "Come, my comrades. I'm giving out these items for the Mid-Autumn Festival. Everyone will get a share, so please distribute them among yourselves. All of you may go home after you've collected your items. Rest well during the holidays and send my greetings to your families. You've all worked hard recently." Zhang Ye was quite a stingy person and did not really earn that much, but he was still a very generous person. Be it the staff's welfare or salary, those who worked at his studio were earning more than the industry standard.

Zhang Zuo smiled and said, "You're handing out this much stuff?"

Little Wang grinned and said, "This isn't considered much!"

Little Zhou smiled. "Boss is the greatest!"

"Oh right, we still haven't congratulated our boss yet," Wu Yi suddenly said.

Everyone immediately responded.

"Haha!"

"Director Zhang, congratulations!"

"Congratulations on your engagement!"

"Who's our female boss going to be?"

"Yeah, Director Zhang, share with us."

Seeing them kick up a fuss, Zhang Ye felt rather amused. "I can't say right now, but everyone will know soon enough."

At this moment, Chenchen strolled in. Old Rao's house was not far from Zhang Ye's office; it was only a few floors down. In the past, when Rao Aimin had to go out for some errands, she would always leave Chenchen with Zhang Ye. But it was even more convenient for her now. Whenever Rao Aimin needed to go out, she would send Chenchen straight up to Zhang Ye's office since there were surely going to be people around to take care of her.

Chenchen looked at all the gifts lying on the floor and said, "Zhang Ye, you're giving out things?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Yeah, why?"

Chenchen nodded. "I want a share as well."

Zhang Ye said in amusement, "You aren't even my employee."

Chenchen was not happy to hear that. She spoke like a little adult and said, "I come up here every day to help you supervise their work. Without me, your studio would have closed down long ago."

Zhang Ye exclaimed, "Looks like I should thank you then."

"You're welcome." Chenchen then opened up a box of mooncakes and sat and chowed down.

Everyone laughed hard.

The items were quickly distributed.

After chatting and joking around for a bit, everyone sat down for a meeting.

Zhang Ye sat at the head of the table and said, "Everyone, please enjoy your time off during this two-day holiday break. After the Mid-Autumn Festival, it'll be time for us to get busy again. I'll give everyone a heads-up, so be ready. On top of that, I want to announce something. When we get back from the holidays, I plan to officially begin my assault for a spot in the S-list!"

Zhang Zuo said, "Of course we must."

Ha Qiqi gave an easy smile. "You're already at the top of the A-list, so the next target is definitely a spot in the national S-list. Even without you saying, we know what to do. All of us have always been working hard in that direction. A few years from now, we'll be doing everything with that target in mind."

"Right!"

"Our target is to reach the top!"

Everyone expressed their stance.

But Zhang Ye said, "No, you guys might've misunderstood what I meant."

Ha Qiqi was taken aback. "Eh?"

Wu Yi asked, "Then what did you mean?"

Zhang Ye said with a smile, "I'm not talking about getting there in a few years' time. I'm talking about doing it immediately, right now."

Everyone exclaimed, "What's the time frame of 'right now'?"

Zhang Ye answered, "Within the next few months."

Everyone vomited blood and started sweating!

Within the next few months?

Break into the S-list?

What the fuck! Are you dreaming?

How is it possible to get into the S-list in just a few months' time?

Ha Qiqi quickly said, "Director Zhang, you're still young and stand out more than anyone else. We're in no rush. You can slowly gain more experience and win more awards to add to your popularity score. All that cannot be done in just a month or two. If you're talking about doing so within a year or two, we might be able to fight for it and push our way up. But to get there within a few months? Even with the momentum of your current daily popularity growth, we still couldn't catch up, isn't that so?"

This was too hasty.

Everyone felt uneasy.

Zhang Ye said, "I know this isn't going to be easy—that's why we need to fight for it. I still have time to get there? I'm 26 and turning 27 this year. I may look like I'm still young and have plenty of time left, but don't forget that I still haven't exactly broken into the Asian scene yet. I don't even have the qualifications to take aim at the international scene. If I were to take a few years to slowly slog my way up to the top of domestic showbiz, how old would I be? I would be past 30! Furthermore, the scene is changing too quickly these days. You guys should have realized that there's a lot of 'fresh meat' out there who are getting more and more popular by the day. They're likely to gain more than half the entertainment industry's market share from here on out. Who can predict what will happen to the domestic entertainment industry in a few years? Who can say for certain? I've never depended on my looks to make

a living anyway. If I just continue slogging ahead, then when the times and trends change, I might not even be able to get into the S-list after two or three years. Opportunities are not gained by slogging but by fighting."

Everyone fell silent.

Little Wang said, "But there's a Heavenly King who's on the downturn. If we wait another one or two years, it's highly possible..."

Zhang Ye shook his head and said, "I've never, ever had the mentality of getting lucky this way. That Heavenly King might not have a good product right now, but he might just suddenly become popular again around the world. Don't take those people in the S-list to be pushovers. If I were the type to wait for those at the top to slip up, I wouldn't have gotten to where I am now. That's how cruel show business is. You've never experienced it before, so it's probably very difficult to understand. But I've always been on the front line witnessing these events, so I know. If I were to slightly lower my guard, I would probably get replaced by someone the very next day."

He gave an example. "Ning Lan is very popular, right? Back then, Sister Ning was also in first place in the A-list rankings, but what happened in the end? She was unable to squeeze into one of those seven spots. I've heard a few people in the industry saying that Sister Ning had been waiting for one of the Heavenly Queens to give up their spot. But after many years of waiting, that Heavenly Queen has yet to relinquish her seat to anyone."

Ha Qiqi took a deep breath. "Is this what you've decided?"

"Yes, that's how I've decided I want it to be." Zhang Ye nodded seriously. "In the next few months, I must definitely get into the S-list. It's not a joke; I am being totally serious here."

Everyone in the studio knew that if the media heard about this, it would definitely cause a huge uproar!

A total of seven people sat on the thrones of the Chinese S-list rankings, and they were the top seven celebrities of the entertainment industry. They were virtually unmovable, even by a lightning strike. Just think of it this way: Every time a change occurred in the S-list, it would cause a great shake-up and reshuffling of the entertainment industry. In this world, this could be considered the biggest event in the entirety of show business!

But today?

Zhang Ye was thinking of forcing his way to the very top?

He wanted to pull down one of those seven people standing atop the pyramid and replace them? And he wanted to do so within a short few months? How brave would he need to be to attempt that!

"Alright, let's do it!"

"We'll listen to whatever you say!"

"Whatever you say, we'll do!"

"Damn, I guess we can only fight!"

"I'll come up with a proposal and give it to you after the holidays!"

"How else can we have it? Since the boss has spoken, let's do it!"

Everyone echoed their compliance but were really quivering on the inside.

Is this doable?

Can they really do it?

Chapter 1202: Project Proposal: Reach the Summit!

The mid-autumn festivities weren't over yet.

It was the last day of the public holidays ¹ for the Mid-Autumn Festival. At noon, Zhang Ye celebrated the festival at his maternal grandma's place. Right after they finished lunch, his three sisters started pestering him with questions.

His second sister stamped her feet. "Brother, are you going to tell us or not!"

His eldest younger sister blinked. "Just who is our sister-in-law?"

His third sister said, "Brother, we're gonna get angry if you don't tell us!"

Zhang Ye laughed heartily. "Another time, I'll tell you guys another time."

"Then write a song for us to make up for hurting our feelings," his second sister said.

Zhang Ye said annoyed, "Write what song?"

His third sister said, "A song to praise your little sisters."

His eldest young sister nodded. "Heehee, good idea."

So Zhang Ye ad-libbed, "Sister, you ride on the prow Brother will pull you along... ai, this song doesn't sound right." He changed songs and sang again, "Sister, bravely march forward Keep marching and don't look back... ai, this isn't right either." After he sung those [two songs](#), he suddenly realized that these two songs had practically nothing to do with blood-related sisters.

Then, Zhang Ye's cell phone rang.

It was from the studio.

Little Wang said: "Boss, the project proposal has been

completed!"

Zhang Ye said: "Aren't you all taking a break over the holidays?"

"You've only given us a few months to reach your target, so who would have the time to go on a break? Every one of us has been putting in overtime to get the proposal out. We're just waiting for you to look at it."

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "Alright, you've all put in a lot of good work. I'll be right over."

"OK, we'll be waiting for you." Little Wang hung up.

Zhang Ye turned around and said, "OK, I've got to go."

In the living room, his maternal grandma asked, "Where to? You're not staying for dinner?"

"I can't, Grandma. I still have some work waiting for me at the studio and will probably be very busy over the next few days. You and Grandpa have to pay attention to your health, alright? If there's anything, just give me a call. I'll be off now." Zhang Ye bade farewell to his grandparents and patted his little sisters on the head before hurrying downstairs.

...

In the afternoon.

At Zhang Ye's Studio.

It was pretty packed as everyone had squeezed into the conference room.

Zhang Zuo took out a copy of the proposal. "Director Zhang, please have a look."

"Alright." Zhang Ye took it from him and browsed through it. "Who wrote this?"

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "Basically of us discussed it before coming up with it together."

The proposal had a very ambitious title. As Zhang Ye had set his sights on the very top seven spots of the entertainment industry's pyramid, the proposal was titled: Reach the Summit. It was even emblazoned in English at the bottom. They kept it locked up in the safe before Zhang Ye's arrival, and everything done until now made it feel like they were handling the American government's Apollo project with all the secrecy surrounding it.

Zhang Ye skimmed through it and felt quite satisfied with the proposal. In the past, he had always been battling alone and would often do as he liked, or flip-flop on his decisions as he wished. He relied only on instinct for everything he did, including his work. But it was different now. With a team, his work productivity increased since there were more people helping him handle all kinds of issues and projects.

"Very good." Zhang Ye nodded.

Zhang Zuo said, "Then shall I briefly outline the proposal guidelines?"

Interested, Zhang Ye said, "Sure."

Zhang Zuo bluntly said, "Actually, we aren't very confident about completing our 'Reach the Summit' plan, because every step we highlighted is rather difficult to achieve. Rather than calling it a proposal, it might be better to say that these are milestones. But since we're trying to take one of the seven spots, the proposal was written in a more idealistic manner. What's more, all of the steps highlighted have to be achieved to realize the plan. If anything is missed, there won't be a chance of bringing the plan to fruition. This proposal was written with us bravely aiming for the unthinkable."

Zhang Ye gave a smile and said, "That's how it should be done. We shouldn't be afraid to fail, but we should be afraid of not daring to dream."

Zhang Zuo heaved a sigh of relief at Zhang Ye's acknowledgment.

He was really afraid that Zhang Ye would reject the proposal as it was too "absurd" in nature. He said, "For the first step of the 'Reach the Summit' plan, we hope that you take home the most coveted domestic literary award that will be announced in the next few days, the Yanhong Literary Prize."

The Yanhong Literary Prize was named after a person.

It was one of the three most coveted awards in the literary world and the winners were chosen once every four years.

Zhang Zuo said, "As we all know, awards weigh heavily in the Celebrity Rankings Index. In the calculation of a celebrity's popularity score, awards contribute in large part. What's more, this is one of the most coveted awards in the literary world, so it means even more. The effects of receiving it would be very positive, so you must get it. Although another top prize called the Qilu Literature Prize will be awarded very soon, that award is more skewed towards longer works like full-length novels and similar works. You don't have a chance of winning that one since you don't have any full-length novels, as *Ghost Blows Out the Light* isn't considered traditional literature. But it's different for the Yanhong Literary Prize, which is targeted more towards poetry and prose. You're definitely one of the hot favorites to win this award that will be given out to five people in total. Logically speaking, you have the best hopes of winning, because in the field of poetry, be it the quality or the number of works produced in the last four years, no one should be able to compete with you."

Ha Qiqi took out an invitation letter. "This was the fax our studio received this morning, sent over by the people from the Yanhong Literary Prize committee. They've included you in the list of nominees, which number 30 candidates in total. We've also compiled the list for you. The final results will be based on the votes given by the judges."

The most coveted literary award?

He really hadn't won an award like that before.

Zhang Ye said while looking through the list, "Alright."

Wu Yi said, "But there are a lot of variables."

Zhang Zuo agreed, "What we just talked about was based on the best possible outcome of our predictions and analysis. The greatest variable in this is your relationship with the literary world. You've never gotten along with them, nor have you been a member of the Writers' Association or any literary organizations. All this time, you've always been doing your own thing outside of the system, so I'm afraid that'll inherently affect your scores. After our final analysis, we came to the conclusion that your best chance of winning is 50/50. It's all going to be down to luck."

Of those in the top seven spots, their greatest difference with Zhang Ye was that they had a lot of distinctions. With so many distinctions, it meant they accumulated a lot of popularity. All of them had so many awards to their names that you could just pick one of them and they would easily have multiple honors, such as being the kings or queens of the silver screen or the equivalent. All of the highest honors were basically a dime a dozen to them. The reason why those seven people were so popular was that they had all the highest honors and awards, which added to their popularity. If Zhang Ye wanted to take one of their spots, he couldn't lose out on this aspect. He had already won the most coveted awards in hosting, mathematics, variety and documentary shows, but he had almost no achievements in the literary field that he was most famous for. In a way, this was really quite unacceptable.

He could only try to fight for it. This most coveted award in the literary field was incredibly valuable. Be it popularity, fame, or qualifications, it would undoubtedly be a huge help to Zhang Ye's quest in trying to reach the summit!

Zhang Ye said, "This is good. You guys only need to think of the

plan, not how it's realized. No matter what the chances are, that's my business. You just need to be responsible for planning and leave the execution to me."

"How impressive, Director Zhang!"

"Understood!"

"I'll go and contact the media!"

"It's time to publicize this."

"I'll go and liaise with the judging panel!"

Everyone felt determined to complete the first step in the "Reach the Summit" plan!

In China, the Mid-Autumn Festival is celebrated over a designated three-day public holiday.

1st song from A Burlak's Love and 2nd song from the TV series Red Sorghum.

Chapter 1203: 'I died for Beauty—but was scarce'!

The Yanhong Literary Prize winners were about to be revealed.

And soon, the winners of the Qilu Literature Prize would also be announced.

Being two of the most coveted awards in the literary world that were given out once every four years, a lot of people paid attention to it regardless of if they were from the literary or the entertainment circles. Many of them even predicted the results.

"Old Tao has high hopes of winning this time."

"He lost by a whisker for the last Yanhong Literary Prize."

"I hope Teacher Sheng can win the award. He turns 78 this year, and of the earliest batch of pioneers, he's the only one who hasn't won any of the most coveted awards in the literary field."

"Sun Fang is quite good too."

"Sun Fang is too young and has too few works to speak of."

"This year looks to be rather interesting."

"Why?"

"Haven't any of you seen the nomination list? Zhang Ye's one of the candidates for the award."

"Haha, Lord Zhang has finally made it into the list of candidates for the most coveted award in the literary field."

"Yeah, Zhang Ye debuted just after the previous Yanhong Literary Prize was given out. This is the first time that he's been included in the list of candidates for the most coveted award, but we'll have to see if the literary circle will want to award it to him or not."

"Right, there's so much suspense."

"If he can win this award, then Zhang Ye would be really awesome!"

"Yeah, he's already gotten the most important awards for hosting, mathematics, documentary and variety shows. If he added the literary field's most coveted award to his list of accolades as well, it would be damn impressive! But then again, this guy is already impressive! There are many people who have won high honors before. For example, Li Ke has won more than ten of the various Film Director and Best Picture awards in the country. But to be able to cross over into different industries and win the best awards in each of them like Zhang Ye did, there really hasn't been anyone like this before. Every one of his high honors would be as valuable as five such awards that other people have won!"

"Based on his works, Zhang Ye deserves to win this year's Yanhong Literary Prize for sure. Who's been in the limelight as much as him over the past four years in the field of literature? Whether it's in the field of poetry or prose, Zhang Ye doesn't have any opponents at all. That 'When You Are Old' he posted on Weibo two days ago has been shared so many times by so many people. The only problem now is whether those people on the judging panel of the Yanhong Literary Prize would want to, or dare to, award it to him. After all, no matter how well-received Zhang Ye's works are to the general populace, the final results still have to depend on the votes of those people from the literary world. Furthermore, it's been proven countless times in the history of all the greatest literary awards—the uncertainty of winning such an award is huge."

"Zhang Ye to compete for Yanhong Literary Prize!"

"Can Zhang Ye add a top literary award to his list of accolades?"

"All attention on the results of the Yanhong Literary Prize!"

"The Writers' Association extends another invitation to Zhang Ye! Will Zhang Ye finally join?"

"Winners of Yanhong Literary Prize to be revealed tonight!"

A majority of the attention from the media was focused on Zhang Ye as he was the most well-known person in the list of nominees. Who else was there to watch?

On Weibo.

Zhang Ye's friends all sent their blessings.

Songstress Zhang Xia: "Wishing Little Zhang good luck."

Singer Li Xiaoxian: "In the literary field, I'm Teacher Zhang's diehard fan. This humble fan hereby wishes her idol a great victory and to take a step up to the summit of the literary world!"

...

There was heated discussion among the public.

Meanwhile, everyone at Zhang Ye's Studio was thrown into chaos because the Writers' Association had sent over an invitation yesterday for Zhang Ye to join them as a member. Afterwards, one of the main judges on the panel of the Yanhong Literary Prize called a press conference to answer about the invitation.

Ha Qiqi said anxiously, "Director Zhang!"

Zhang Ye was doing his makeup and did not answer her.

Zhang Zuo was standing behind, urging him, "Why don't you just join?"

"Yeah, we have nothing to lose by joining." Ha Qiqi checked her watch and said, "We still have to go to the award ceremony venue tonight, but there won't be time if we don't answer them!"

But Zhang Ye just said to the makeup artist, "Don't overdo it, just some light makeup will do."

Wu Yi was also trying to persuade him close by. "Have you forgotten about our plan to reach the summit? This award is of great importance to us and you really have to win it. Now that

their side is asking you to join them, that means this is their condition for you. It's a good thing since it means they've decided to give in and agree to let you in to the Writers' Association. It also means that the literary world has officially given you their recognition, so that would mean the Yanhong Literary Prize is in the bag!"

Zhang Ye continued ignoring them.

Little Wang dragged Zhang Ye's agent, Rao Aimin, over.

"What is it?" Rao Aimin said impatiently, "I was just making dinner."

Little Wang said gloomily, "Big Sis Rao, Director Zhang's throwing a tantrum again. Nothing that any of us says is of use. Please help us change his mind. Otherwise, the most coveted award that should be his will be gone for sure."

Rao Aimin acknowledged her.

Zhang Ye looked over. "Old Rao, come with me to the awards ceremony tonight?"

Rao Aimin sneered at him. "I finally managed to grab a few days of peace and you're already giving me things to deal with?"

"Alright then, I'll go by myself." Zhang Ye shrugged.

Ha Qiqi looked at Rao Aimin.

Little Wang gave Rao Aimin's arm a strong nudge.

Suddenly, a call arrived. It was from a member of the Yanhong Literary Prize's judging panel. This was the umpteenth time they were calling to check if Zhang Ye had filled out his application to join the Writers' Association.

Little Wang didn't know what to say. "We..."

Rao Aimin took two steps and said in an unhurried tone, "Pass it to me."

Little Wang quickly handed the telephone to her.

Rao Aimin said to the employee on the line, "Are you crazy or what? How can you be so annoying by calling so often? The judging panel should just do their job and vote, what's with all this nonsensical crap that you're giving me....Who am I? I'm Zhang Ye's agent! Whatever it is you want, speak to me!"

She broke that person off with a few lines!

Everyone at the studio was dumbfounded listening!

"Sister Rao!"

"Aiyo!"

We were hoping you'd persuade Director Zhang, but you're not helping matters like this!

They finally understood why Rao Aimin, a person who was not from this field, had ended up being Zhang Ye's agent. Their tempers were far too alike. Each of them was more bad-tempered than the other!

Zhang Zuo gave a bitter smile and said, "Director Zhang, this is the Yanhong Literary Prize we're talking about!"

Little Wang stamped her feet anxiously. "Why are you being like this, Director Zhang?"

Zhang Ye smiled as he got up and looked at them. "Because it would look really ugly!"

Because it wasn't beautiful?

Because it would look really ugly?

What kind of reason was that!

In the entire room, perhaps only Zhang Ye and Rao Aimin would understand what it meant by "looking ugly." Zhang Ye really wanted to reach the summit and win this important award of the literary world, but he couldn't let it become something that would

work against him.

...

On the same night.

At the Yanhong Literary Prize awards ceremony venue.

Reporters from all the different media outlets and the nominees for the award, as well as many authoritative figures from the industry, were present.

When Zhang Ye arrived, he immediately got surrounded by reporters.

It was Elder Qian who came over to help him escape. "Little Zhang, come, come, come, sit over here!"

Elder Qian was a person of distinction in the literary world. At the couplet competition a very long time ago, Elder Qian was the judge and guest. Zhang Ye had known him for several years, and he could be considered one of the few friends Zhang Ye had in the literary world. At that time, Elder Qian had also invited Zhang Ye to join the Writers' Association, but was tactfully rejected by Zhang Ye's "Facing the Sea as Spring Blossoms."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "How are you doing, Elder Qian?"

"What do you think?" Elder Qian guffawed.

Zhang Ye said, "What do I think? It looks to me you wouldn't have a problem running the 10,000-meter race."

Elder Qian grunted, "You must be trying to kill me!"

Zhang Ye: "Haha! Oh right, are you part of the judging panel for the Yanhong Literary Prize?"

Elder Qian shook his head. "No, but I am the main judge for the Qilu Literature Prize, which will be given out sometime later. I was invited as a guest this time. Quick, take a seat."

Soon after, the awards ceremony began!

The winners' list was revealed!

A leader of the literary world announced, "I'll be announcing the final voting results of the 7th Yanhong Literary Prize awards. The five winners are respectively: Tao Chihao!"

Applause sounded from the audience!

Everyone in the writers' zone looked over at Teacher Tao.

"Sheng Nian!"

Applause rang again!

"Xue Li!"

Xue Li's jaw dropped in excitement and looked to be in disbelief!

"Qiao Huayi!"

Old Qiao smacked his thigh and laughed happily.

The final winner was about to be announced!

There was only one spot left!

The leader deliberately paused for a moment before saying loudly, "Chen Bang!"

The five award winners were revealed and made their way up on stage to collect their prizes!

However, the media and many of the writers were looking at one another in speechlessness. Some of them even drew in a deep breath!

Zhang Ye's name was not called!

The Yanhong Literary Prize really was not awarded to Zhang Ye!

But Zhang Ye just looked very calm and did not show any change in expression.

Elder Qian looked at him very startled. "Little Zhang, you didn't join the Writers' Association?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "No, I didn't."

Elder Qian facepalmed. "Aiyo, you sure are great. I thought that you had joined since I heard they sent the application form to you. All you had to do was to sign it!"

Zhang Ye said, "I didn't sign it."

"This is the once-every-four-years Yanhong Literary Prize." Elder Qian said, "Are you going to throw it away just like that?"

But Zhang Ye corrected, "Elder Qian, it's not that I don't want this award, nor did I throw it away. If that were the case, why would I be sitting here today? This is the greatest respect I can show to the Yanhong Literary Prize. Whether or not I get it, I've turned up and even dressed up to attend the ceremony." He pointed at what he was wearing, then laughed and said, "I've already given it my best and done what I had to do, but the prize did not choose me."

Elder Qian fell silent.

The young writers around him also fell silent.

Yes. Zhang Ye had done all he could. What was the role of a writer?

It was creation!

It was writing!

It was picking up one's pen!

Zhang Ye had done all that, so what else were they expecting of him?

The awards ceremony came to an end!

Before Zhang Ye could even leave his seat, he was mobbed by a swarm of reporters!

"Teacher Zhang, what do you have to say about not winning this award?"

"I heard it was because you offended the judging panel of the

Yanhong Literary Prize, so does that mean that there won't be a place for you in the future issuings of this award? That you will be excluded from here on out?"

"Did you join the Writers' Association?"

"We received news that if you had agreed to join the Writers' Association and become a member, you would definitely have been awarded a Yanhong Literary Prize today!"

"Why didn't you agree to join the Writers' Association?"

"Teacher Zhang, will you be back to fight for the Yanhong Literary Prize in another four years?"

Zhang Ye did not accept their interview and walked off silently.

Online, the news had spread as well.

"What?"

"They're really not giving it to Zhang Ye?"

"Holy shit! The Yanhong Literary Prize is getting more and more pointless!"

"I've never even heard of three of the five winners before!"

"The value of this year's Yanhong Literary Prize is really too low!"

"Zhang Ye is not in the list of winners? Are you kidding me?"

"Zhang Ye's poems are not even good enough to win the award? Oh my God, just how high is the entry barrier of the Yanhong Literary Prize? Don't scare me like that!"

"Is there even a need to explain? They wanted Zhang Ye to join them, but Zhang Ye totally ignored them!"

"It's over. Even if Zhang Ye wants to have a go at the top award of the literary world, he has to wait another four years."

"Would the Yanhong Literary Prize's judging panel give it to him even if he waits another four years?"

"This is not cool at all!"

"Actually, Zhang Ye would've been capable of winning if he had just bowed down and joined the Writers' Association. They set the conditions for him, but it was just that he chose not to follow their wishes! Look at it now, it's all over for him!"

Countless citizens questioned this outcome!

Some experts and scholars raised their doubts to the Yanhong Literary Prize committee. There were even some people who slammed the decision and thought that this year's Yanhong Literary Prize had greatly damaged the reputation of one of the top awards in the literary world!

There were scoldings!

There were criticisms!

The Yanhong Literary Prize's judging panel was thrust to the forefront!

Later, when the committee officials realized the severity of the situation, they immediately issued a response to explain why Zhang Ye was not qualified enough to win the award. They came up with reasons like how he was too young, how he had not joined any literary organizations before, how some of his works were too radical in thought, were too aggressive and harsh in nature, etc, etc. In short, all they were saying was that with Zhang Ye's qualifications, he was not yet deserving to be awarded this year's Yanhong Literary Prize and that their judging panel was not biased against him.

Then, right at this moment.

Zhang Ye posted a poem on his Weibo.

["I died for Beauty—but was scarce"](#)

I died for Beauty—but was scarce

Adjusted in the Tomb

When One who died for Truth, was lain

In an adjoining Room—

He questioned softly "Why I failed"?

"For Beauty", I replied—

"And I—for Truth—Themselves are One—

We Brethren, are", He said—

And so, as Kinsmen, met a Night—

We talked between the Rooms—

Until the Moss had reached our lips—

And covered up—Our names—

When this poem emerged, it shocked the entire literary world.
The voices of controversy became even more intense!

When a few writers and poets who had been awarded previous
Yanhong Literary Prizes saw this poem, they were rocked by a
sadness stemming from the bottom of their hearts!

For beauty?

You died for beauty?

All of them understood what Zhang Ye was trying to convey.
They knew that if Zhang Ye had agreed to join the Writers'
Association, his name would surely be on the Yanhong Literary
Prize!

But he didn't do so!

Because that would look really ugly?

For such a poem, for such a person, was he really unqualified to
win one of the most coveted awards of the literary world? What
was this top award set up for in the first place? What was its
selection criteria? Was it meant to be a selection of works? Or was
it meant to be a selection of people? Or perhaps, all of it was simply

the product of the judges' personal preferences?

On Weibo.

The reaction of the people was completely one-sided.

"Zhang Ye is so cool!"

"What a good 'I died for Beauty,' it's making my blood boil!"

"Just based on this poem alone, which of the five winners of this year's Yanhong Literary Prize can compare to Zhang Ye? Huh? Tell me, which of them can compare?"

"It's just an important award of the literary world, isn't it? It's not like the Yanhong Literary Prize is the only one out there!"

"Yeah, the Qilu Literature Prize that will be given out a few days later is the true highest honor of the literary world! It's much more valuable than the Yanhong Literary Prize for sure! Teacher Zhang, win that for us!"

"Fuck, the Qilu Literature Prize is only meant for full-length novels."

"I don't care, I'll give my support to Zhang Ye in any case! No two ways about it!"

"Teacher Zhang, we're cheering you on. Even if you didn't win this time, there are still chances in the future. There will surely be a place for you among the winners of the highest honors of the literary world! Just keep pursuing the beauty that you believe in! That's what we like about you!"

"Beauty—more important than anything else!"

"Furious approval of Zhang Ye!"

"The Yanhong Literary Prize's judging panel must be blind!"

Chapter 1204: Zhang Ye's new novel!

The next day.

The uproar over the Yanhong Literary Prize had died down. This was how cruel it was at the level of the highest awards. Even if anyone had doubt, even if everyone was protesting for Zhang Ye, the award that was held once every four years was already given. No one could change the results. Those five names would be entered into the annals of the Yanhong Literary Prize, into the annals of the literary world, while Zhang Ye missed his only opportunity to do so. After several years, the majority in the literary field were still not acknowledging Zhang Ye, whom they viewed as someone who had come from an unconventional background.

Everyone thought the issue had blown over.

Everyone thought Zhang Ye had been felled by the thing called "beauty."

In the morning.

At the studio.

Several colleagues arrived at work in a listless mood.

"You're here?"

"Yeah, morning."

"Hai, have you seen Director Zhang's poem?"

"I've read it already. This industry is just cruel like that."

"After reading that poem, I feel that Director Zhang's decision was right. It's getting really ugly in the entertainment industry these days. There's so much compromise, betrayal, and out-of-control hype, so there's nothing wrong with doing things a little more beautifully!"

"But he threw away the most coveted award because of that."

"The plans to reach the summit have gone up in smoke!"

"Ai, we couldn't even complete the first step of the plan, so it'll only get harder from here."

"I don't think there's any hope of reaching the summit this year. Our Director Zhang has offended too many people and industries. The further he climbs, the more pressure there will be on him. He's paying off his past debts. There are probably a lot of people who are waiting for Director Zhang to fall, and many of them should be applauding as well. He wants to reach the summit? If Director Zhang drops his guard even for a second, just watch, countless people are sure to rush up to try to take a chunk out of him!"

Everyone was chatting among themselves.

Ha Qiqi had just bought breakfast and stepped into the office.

Then, footfalls came from upstairs. "Let them try. To be honest, I've never lost the many conflicts that I've had in all these years. I would really like to see who can take a chunk out of me."

It was Zhang Ye!

Zhang Zuo said, "Ah?"

Little Wang said in surprise, "Why are you here so early?"

"What do you mean by early?" Zhang Ye laughed and said, "I haven't left since I got back here yesterday. Quick, did anyone buy breakfast?"

Ha Qiqi unwittingly answered, "I did."

Zhang Ye jogged over to her and plopped down. He grabbed some soup dumplings and stuffed them into his mouth. After he ate a few of them, he even pretended to be polite and said to Ha Qiqi, "Have some too, Sister Ha."

Ha Qiqi was speechless.

What do you want me to eat!

You didn't even leave any for me!

Wu Yi asked curiously, "You didn't sleep the entire night?"

Zhang Ye inserted a straw into a cup and slurped on soy milk. "Yeah."

Seeing Zhang Ye in such a good mood, Zhang Zuo was feeling very curious. Based on Director Zhang's temper, he would've flown into a rage at a time like this. Why was he still acting so calmly? He probed, "Director Zhang, has our previous plan to reach the summit been canceled? Will the plan still be carri—"

Zhang Ye asked in surprise, "Why would it be canceled?"

Zhang Zuo smiled bitterly. "But we couldn't even achieve the first milestone."

After he finished drinking the soy milk, Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I've said before, you guys only need to think of the plan. As for how it will be realized, that isn't for you to worry about. That's my business."

As they spoke, it gradually turned into a meeting, so everyone sat down.

Ha Qiqi said, "Our first step of the plan was for you to win one of the most coveted awards in the domestic literary world so that you could polish up your credentials to help push your popularity higher. With the newly gained popularity from winning the award, the second step would be to publish another novel like *Ghost Blows Out the Light*. We would then try our best to make it a bestseller. You haven't written a novel in a long time, so that should help you increase your popularity within the literary field and bring it to new heights. In that way, we could've taken another big step towards the realization of our plan to reach the summit. But now that you didn't manage to win one of the most important awards in the domestic literary world, the next step would be—"

But Zhang Ye pointed upstairs and said, "I've already started on a

new novel."

Zhang Zuo exclaimed, "You've already begun writing it?"

"Yeah, what else did you guys think I was doing all night?" Zhang Ye suddenly remembered something. "Oh right, hurry up and contact the publishing firm. We can already get the process started."

Ha Qiqi asked, "When will you finish writing it?"

Zhang Ye looked at the calendar and said, "I'll try to finish it in two days."

Two days?

Was he writing a short story?

"OK."

"Understood."

"I will go and liaise with the publishing firm!"

Nobody asked further.

Zhang Ye did not say anything else either. After he finished eating, he ran upstairs. Everyone heard his office door shut. Until evening, no one saw Zhang Ye take a step out from his office.

The next day.

It was past 5 PM.

The office door opened and Zhang Ye came downstairs sporting an unkempt look.

Everyone stood.

"Aiyo!"

"Director Zhang, you finally came out!"

"Quick, come and eat dinner. I've already bought something for you!"

"You nearly scared us to death! You didn't even open the door

when we knocked."

But Zhang Ye laughed and said spiritedly, "Little Wang, print the draft out."

He had finished writing it within two days, but there was a heavy price to pay. Zhang Ye had barely gotten any sleep these past two days, as he spent close to 20 hours a day typing in front of the computer. He had always been like that and was someone who would work himself to death. Everyone knew his character.

Little Wang ran upstairs to print the draft.

20 pages.

50 pages.

100 pages.

The draft was printed out page by page.

Everyone in the studio was getting more and more dumbfounded as they watched.

Ha Qiqi said in a startled manner, "Why are there so many pages?"

Zhang Zuo quickly flipped through the printed pages to have a look. "Th-This many words?"

"There are around 200,000 words or so. I'm not sure since I didn't count," Zhang Ye said offhandedly.

200,000 words!

Everyone was shocked!

It didn't even take two days, but you've already written 200,000 words? Damn, there were fast writers around, but wasn't that still way too fast! Was a grave robbing novel that easy to write?

When everyone gathered around to read the draft, they were stunned again!

"What?"

"This, this isn't a grave robbing novel!"

"Director Zhang, what happened?"

"Is this a romance novel?"

"Or is it about marriage?"

"This doesn't fit with what we discussed, Director Zhang!"

Everyone in the studio looked at each other and felt that this was too risky. You can't be writing a novel about marriage just because you're getting married, right? This kind of novel does not have much of a market and is not easy to sell! Having written *Ghost Blows Out the Light*, the people had expectations of his new novel. As long as they gave it a similar title such as *Ghost Blows Out the Light 2*, the book sales wouldn't do too badly. So they couldn't comprehend why Zhang Ye would touch on the topic of marriage for his new novel!

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "This is it. Contact the publishing firm and get the book out there as soon as possible."

He said that with a lot of certainty, so they had to do as they were told.

After gobbling up his dinner, Zhang Ye was so happy that he even had some Erguotou to drink. Afterwards, he walked into the empty conference room and took out his cell phone to make a call.

It was a call to Elder Qian.

Du du. The call went through.

"Elder Qian, have you had dinner yet?"

"Oh, it's Little Zhang? I just finished eating, why? Is there something that you're looking for me for?"

"You mentioned that you were on the judging panel for the Qilu Literature Prize?"

"Yeah, what's the matter?"

"How does one qualify for the Qilu Literature Prize?"

"Why are you asking? The nomination for the Qilu Literature Prize depends on the literature in question. We go through the better literature that's published within the last four years, and every member of the judging panel is tasked with nominating one or two novels to the shortlist. These books will then be placed into the final selection pool and be voted on so that five winners will be chosen to receive the final award."

"Oh, then why don't you help me nominate a novel?"

"Whose novel is it?"

"Mine."

Elder Qian laughed aloud after being taken aback for a moment. "Your novels won't do. Be it that Ghost Blows Out the Light or Legend of Wukong, none of those books fulfill the requirements to get nominated, nor are they considered literature in the traditional sense of the word. The Qilu Literature Prize emphasizes more on literary merit, so I'm afraid I can't give you a pass on that."

Zhang Ye said in amusement: "Don't worry, it's my new novel I'm talking about."

Only then did Elder Qian take him seriously again. "Do you intend to compete for the Qilu Literature Prize?"

"Yes," Zhang Ye said.

"Are you serious?"

"Does it sound like I'm joking?"

Elder Qian did not quite understand. "But why?"

Zhang Ye answered with a laugh: "For beauty."

Why did he fail?

For beauty!

And why did he stand again?

Still for beauty!

Elder Qian stayed silent for a few seconds before saying: "What's the title of the novel?"

Zhang Ye placidly answered: " [Fortress Besieged](#)."

Chapter 1205: The Qilu Literature Prize Judging Panel

On this day.

The nominee list for one of the most coveted literary awards, the Qilu Literature Prize, was released!

The list was packed with several dozen names and novels!

Spring Returns, Han Dong

Love by the Lake, Liu Tianqi

River Maple, Li Duan

Fortress Besieged, Zhang Ye

And so on.

This was the grandest affair in the literary field. After the warm-up that was the Yanhong Literary Prize, the Qilu Literature Prize selection attracted even more attention.

The Yanhong Literary Prize, Qilu Literature Prize, and another literary award made up three of the most coveted awards in the literary field. Although they were supposed to be equal in standing, some basic differences in value and influence still existed between the three awards. It was headed by the Qilu Literature Prize since full-length novels were the most influential to the mainstream. So the Qilu Literature Prize was considered the most prestigious of the three highest awards in literature and also the most difficult title to achieve in the literary field.

Just like the Mao Dun Literature Prize, Lu Xun Literary Prize, Lao She Literary Award, and other literary awards of Zhang Ye's previous world, it was clear that the Mao Dun Literature Prize was the most prestigious of all.

The Qilu Literature Prize was basically the equivalent to the Mao

Dun Literature Prize back in Zhang Ye's previous world!

Online.

"It's finally here!"

"The Qilu Literature Prize, what a heavyweight!"

"I wonder who the winners will be this time!"

"Master Liu Tianqi should be able to win, right? The committee owes him one from the previous time!"

"That's difficult to say. Just look at the Yanhong Literary Prize awards. Everyone felt that Zhang Ye had a very good chance of winning, but how did that turn out? He didn't get anything at all, so it's really too difficult to make any predictions."

"Don't bring up the Yanhong Literary Prize anymore, ptui!"

"Haha, the officials on the Yanhong Literary Prize committee have been badly scolded the past few days."

"Yeah, even for someone like me who's not a fan of Zhang Ye feels that he has been wronged this time. When Zhang Ye got into fights, I criticized him. When he created trouble, I couldn't bear to look. But when he deserves the honor, I have to give it to him. We have to be reasonable here. His poetry and essays are truly deserving of the Yanhong Literary Prize!"

"Previous poster's view is very fair. I am not Zhang Ye's fan either. I feel that the seven Heavenly Kings and Queens all know how to behave better than Zhang Ye, but his results and contribution to the literary world cannot be denied."

"Eh, have a look at this, quickly!"

"A look at what?"

"Huh, why is Zhang Ye's name on the nominee list?"

"Ah? Damn, it's really there!"

"Zhang Ye? Fortress Besieged?"

"What is this? What book is this Fortress Besieged?"

"Zhang Ye hasn't written that book."

"You silly people, there are so many authors out there who are named Zhang Ye. I personally know of two literary figures named Zhang Ye."

"Hai, so that's how it is. I was surprised for a moment there."

"He really does have a common name."

"Haha, that's what I thought too! Would Zhang Ye know how to write literary fiction!"

"I love Ghost Blows Out the Light the most!"

Everyone joked around some and did not take the appearance of this name too seriously after that.

Even the media reporters and industry insiders did not think too much about it. Zhang Ye's previous books were all famous, and everyone had really not heard of him writing a book titled Fortress Besieged.

The reporters were all busy working on their drafts, with some of chasing after interviews with several key authors, while others were writing reports to help the general public understand more about the literary awards.

Such as the following: The literary field's awards are unlike those given out in the film and television industry. In the film and television industry, there are all sorts of different top award ceremonies held in China, in Hong Kong, and also globally. It's possible for one person to win a lot of them, like Zhang Yuanqi, or even Ning Lan, who had won the highest honors in the film and television industry more than once. It's even possible to win the same awards repeatedly. Perhaps they would take the crown of Best Actress this year, and then win it again during the next year. Even though it rarely happens, it's still a possibility. However, it's different for the highest honors of the literary field. Here,

although there are no hard and fast rules outlining it, there are some practices and traditions that have gained the consensus of the Chinese literary field. For one, an author could only win one of the highest domestic honors in their entire lifetime!

Take for example.

Once a certain person won the Yanhong Literary Prize, the future Yanhong Literary Prize committees would never let them be nominated again. No matter how good that person's future works are or how well they do, it wouldn't matter. This is due to the fact that they've won it before. Furthermore, once either one of the three highest honors were won, they would lose their qualification to receive any of the other two highest honors.

If they'd won the Yanhong Literary Prize before, they wouldn't have a chance of winning the Qilu Literature Prize.

If they won the Qilu Literature Prize, there wouldn't be a need to win the other awards anyway.

This was generally how it was.

The public was getting rowdy.

Especially in the literary field. It was as though they were in the opening of the Olympics. Many of the literary figures were currently very active, appearing on all the different major television stations and enjoying the attention that this grand literary affair was shining on them.

...

Meanwhile.

The members of the Qilu Literature Prize judging panel were almost coming to blows with each other!

Someone banged on the table and shouted, "I don't agree with this!"

Someone said with a darkened expression, "Why was Zhang Ye

placed in the shortlist?"

Elder Qian explained, "I was the one who nominated him."

That person said, "Elder Qian, no one has read this book before, and it hasn't even been published yet, so how could you nominate it? This hasn't been done in accordance with the rules at all!"

Elder Meng, who had quite a good relationship with Elder Qian, banged the table and said, "Quiet down, all of you. This is a small room, you guys don't have to raise your voices for us to hear you. Let me say this, Elder Qian has not done anything wrong at all. The novel Zhang Ye wrote has already been allocated an ISBN number from the publisher, and all the formalities surrounding it have also been completed. Although it hasn't officially been put up for sale yet, the award's rules only state that all nominated works shall have an assigned ISBN number. There isn't any stipulation that the book has to have tens of thousands of copies published before it can be shortlisted for the award."

A female member of the panel said, "But no one has read this book before."

Elder Qian smiled and said, "I did."

Elder Meng sighed, "I did as well."

A middle-aged member of the panel asked curiously, "How was it?"

Elder Meng smiled wryly and said, "I don't know how to put it, but if you really want me to use a word to describe it, I can only say it was 'shocking.' You all can read it for yourselves to find out."

Shocking?

Elder Meng used the word "shocking" to describe it?

Just how high was that praise?

Zhang Ye? He could even write literary fiction?

Why does it not sound believable at all!

Someone mentioned, "But he's such a controversial person. Just look at what happened at the Yanhong Literary Prize award ceremony. They were criticized so miserably, so we better not get ourselves into such a mess as well."

Elder Qian looked at the several of them. "Is the Qilu Literature Prize given out for the person or for the book?"

One of them answered, "The book."

Elder Qian said, "I don't care what Zhang Ye's character is like. I'm not bothered about what kind of personality he has either. It also does not matter to me whether or not he's part of the Writers' Association. All I know is that in the current field of literature, there aren't any books that can compare with Fortress Besieged! No one else can write something as good as it!"

This was no longer a matter of high praise. This was the utmost affirmation that one could give a person or a book!

No one else can write something as good as it?

No other books can compare?

How is that possible!

After the meeting was over, everyone went their separate ways.

"Where's the book?"

"In the library."

"OK, I'll go and read it."

"Me too. I've already read all the other books that were nominated to the shortlist, so there isn't a need to go through those again. It's only this Fortress Besieged that I've never heard before."

"Let's head over together then."

"I'd like to see just what kind of a novel someone like Zhang Ye who used to write grave robbing and children's stories in the past

can come up with."

...

The next day.

It was another scheduled meeting for the Qilu Literature Prize judging panel.

The meeting was presided by Elder Meng, who was carrying out the selection progress meeting.

Elder Meng said, "In another two days, we'll be announcing the winners of the award. Let's discuss them. By the way, has everyone read the nominated titles?"

There was silence across the board.

Elder Meng asked, "What's the matter? No one has anything to say?"

A female member of the panel said, "Was Fortress Besieged really written by Zhang Ye?"

Elder Meng laughed and said, "It wasn't written by me, that's for sure."

Elder Qian looked at her. "Little Yan, what's your evaluation of it?"

The woman took a deep breath and thought about it for a long time before finally saying, "For someone who can write a book like that, I don't think there's even a need for them to compete for any sort of award in the country! No author in China can write that kind of book. If I were to vote, I would surely vote for it. Not for Zhang Ye, but for the book!"

Another member of the panel said with a wry grin, "I haven't come across a book like that in many years. Reading it gave me an indescribable feeling. It's not even possible to call it 'shocking.' All I want to do right now is run home so that I can read and analyze Fortress Besieged a few more times. The knowledge and language

in this book is simply profound!"

Someone said, "How is it possible that Zhang Ye wrote a book like that! For someone who used to write grave robbing novels and fairy tales, this is too great of a leap!"

All of them had given Fortress Besieged a read!

The first feeling that came to them upon finishing it was disbelief!

How were they going to vote?

Was there even a need to vote?

Elder Qian spoke, "When I first met Little Zhang for the first time, I said that if there was anyone from our country who could win one of the top international literary awards in the next 5 to 15 years, it would be Zhang Ye. From the looks of it, my prediction is slowly coming true."

"But the Qilu Literature Prize..."

"How can we possibly award it to him?"

"Zhang Ye is too controversial a person!"

"He's someone who operates totally outside of our domestic literary arena."

Elder Qian said, "You're all members of the judging panel and have the freedom to vote as you wish for whomever you think deserves to win the Qilu Literature Prize. No one can stop you."

"Hai."

"This is really tricky!"

Many of the judges on the judging panel got headaches due to this problem!

Zhang Ye had given them a colossally difficult decision to make!

Chapter 1206: The release of Fortress Besieged!

In the morning.

At the studio.

After catching up on two days of no sleep, Zhang Ye returned to work.

"Good morning, Director Zhang."

"Director Zhang, you're here?"

"Have you had enough rest?"

"Don't pull that many all-nighters in the future."

"Yeah, you scared us to death."

Everyone said a few words of concern to him.

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "The kind of life I lead is tiresome. I can be as free as I want when I have downtime, but when I get busy, I'm especially busy. I'm used to this. Oh right, is there anything going on these next few days?"

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "Nothing important, but tomorrow will be the launch of your novel."

Zhang Ye said, "Oh? They've finished printing it already?"

Ha Qiqi said, "The publishing firm put in overtime and finally managed to meet 200,000 copies for the first print run. We did not have much time to carry out any heavy promotions for the novel as it was too rushed. Otherwise, if we had had a month to prepare, the marketing would surely have been very effective. Since we couldn't promote it properly, we aren't really sure how the sales will do."

Zhang Ye said calmly, "It's fine. Just sell however much we can."

Ha Qiqi nodded. "Starting from now, we'll be following up with the promotional work for the novel. The money has already been paid, so we'll start seeing the ad campaigns today."

"Alright, great job," Zhang Ye said.

Zhang Zuo suddenly said, "Eh, are they going to announce the winners for the Qilu Literature Prize tomorrow as well?"

Little Wang was giggling as she looked at a monitor. Then she got stunned. "Eh? This nominee list!"

The nearby people instinctively looked over.

"What's the matter?"

"There's a Zhang Ye on the nominee list?"

"Haha, it must be someone with the same name."

"Let me have a look. Heh, you're right!"

"How coincidental, there's really an author with the same name as Director Zhang."

"Eh, the nominated novel is titled Fortress Besieged?"

"Whoa, what a coincidence! It even has the same title as Director Zhang's new novel?"

Having said that, everyone in the studio froze!

What?

The author's name was Zhang Ye?

And the novel's title was also titled Fortress Besieged?

What the hell! Coincidence, your sister!

Isn't this Director Zhang himself?!

Wu Yi was dumbfounded. "Director Zhang, did you get nominated for the Qilu Literature Prize?"

Little Wang's eyes nearly popped out of their sockets. "Surely not, right? What's with this?"

"Ah?" Zhang Ye said in surprise, "Didn't I tell you guys?"

Zhang Zuo exclaimed, "When did you tell us? No one knows about this!"

Zhang Ye sighed. "I must've been too tired. I've been sleeping so much the past two days that I forgot all about it. Yes, Fortress Besieged was nominated."

Ha Qiqi said in disbelief, "How could it be that your marriage-themed novel was nominated for the Qilu Literature Prize? Doesn't that award only shortlist literary fiction?"

Little Wang said, "Yeah, what's with this?"

Zhang Ye said in amusement, "Haven't you guys read the novel?"

Everyone shook their heads. They had been too busy liaising with the publishing firm, readying the promotional materials, and handling other matters, so who would have the time to flip through the novel page by page and read it carefully?

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Didn't I say it before? We'll continue with the plan to reach the summit. If we can't complete the first step of our plan, then we'll combine it with the second step. It's probably a good thing that I didn't manage to win the Yanhong Literary Prize. If I did, I couldn't have been nominated for the Qilu Literature Prize. Comparing the prestige of these two awards, the Qilu Literature Prize is actually the more coveted of the domestic literary awards." With that, he spread his hands. "But of course, I don't know if I can win this time either."

The studio staff got very excited!

They thought he had missed out on getting a high honor of the Chinese literary field, but who could have expected that Zhang Ye's new novel would actually get nominated for the famous Qilu Literature Prize as well? This was excellent, great news for them! The only thing that made everyone feel a little doubtful was that Director Zhang had taken less than two fucking days to finish

writing this novel that contained 200,000 words of pure bull...pure literature, so would he really be able to win the highest honor in the literary field?

Could he really do it?

Why did it feel like it was hopeless no matter how they looked at it!

Surely the Qilu Literature Prize wasn't that "cheap," right?

However—

Qian Zhongshu!

Fortress Besieged!

They couldn't possibly know what these four words stood for back in Zhang Ye's previous world!

...

Later that morning.

The promotions began.

On an ad page in the Beijing Times, the cover of Fortress Besieged, along with Zhang Ye's photo and a written introduction by him, were printed.

Fortress Besieged.

Marriage is like a fortress besieged.

Those who are outside want to get in.

And those who are inside want to get out.

—Zhang Ye's first novel, themed around marriage, will meet everyone on the bookshelves tomorrow!

On the other newspapers and some discussion forums, advertisement spots had also been purchased for the novel!

The official Weibo of Zhang Ye's Studio also posted an announcement.

Following, Zhang Ye's personal Weibo shared the announcement post and added simply: "My new novel will go on sale tomorrow at all major bookstores. Everyone, please join in and support me."

This news had come too abruptly!

It was so sudden that it left everyone in the industry, as well as the public, unable to react to it!

It was so sudden that many of the media reporters felt like they had a rude awakening!

"A new novel?"

"Why wasn't there any news about this beforehand?"

"Zhang Ye wrote another novel?"

"Eh, Fortress Besieged?"

"Why does it sound so familiar?"

"Yeah, it sounds familiar to me too. I seem to have seen it somewhere."

"Fuck! Look at the Qilu Literature Prize's nominee list!"

"Ah, yes. It's the Qilu Literature Prize, I remember it now!"

"Zhang Ye! Fortress Besieged!"

"Your grandpa! So it wasn't actually someone with the same name? Fuck!"

"Oh my God! Zhang Ye has been nominated for the Qilu Literature Prize!"

"The novel was nominated even before its release? Just what kind of novel is it!"

"Zhang Ye is getting married soon; is that why he's chosen to touch on the topic of marriage with a literary novel? But it's been proven in recent years that this sort of novel doesn't sell well. What's more, this is even literary fiction?"

"Zhang Ye will be competing for the Qilu Literature Prize?"

"That can't be, right? He's never written literary fiction before. In the past, he's only dabbled in genre fiction. This is Zhang Ye's first time writing a full-length novel, so how could he possibly win an award for it? And we're talking about the Qilu Literature Prize here. Do you think the award is like the cabbages in the market? Anyone can get one if they want one? Aiyo, let me process this for a moment! This is mind-blowing!"

The power of the people was limitless.

Having missed out on the Yanhong Literary Prize, Zhang Ye was in the news. When his nomination for the Qilu Literature Prize was revealed, it spread through the Internet like wildfire!

"Come and see this, quickly! Zhang Ye will be releasing a new novel!"

"Is Face-smacking Zhang making a comeback?"

"I must buy a copy of it tomorrow and see how it is!"

"I don't like literary novels, they're too contrived! I can't understand them!"

"I don't like them either, but we're talking about Zhang Ye's novel. Even if I won't read it, I must still buy two copies and leave them at home. Can't help it, I'm a braindead fan of his, after all!"

"Hahaha, me too!"

"Supporting Teacher Zhang!"

"Supporting Face-smacking Zhang in his fight for the Qilu Literature Prize!"

"I'll reserve my judgment on how the novel is. I hope he didn't forcefully put something together just so he could release a book."

"I would buy the novel even if he wrote rubbish. I just want to see how Zhang Ye will write a marriage-themed novel. There might even be a description of Zhang Ye's wife that could help us guess

her identity!"

"Zhang Ye is too crafty! He knew that people are paying attention to his marriage, so he came up with a marriage-themed novel. He's obviously just trying to make a quick buck!"

"Haha, then will you buy it or not?"

"Of course I...will buy it while holding back tears!"

"We'll find out tomorrow if his novel is any good! The release of Fortress Besieged tomorrow will also be the day that the results of the Qilu Literature Prize are announced. It's all going to happen on the same day!"

Even before its release!

Fortress Besieged was trending!

Chapter 1207: Fortress Besieged sells like crazy!

The next day.

On the day of the book's launch.

In the morning, a huge crowd had gathered at the Xidan Bookstore entrance. Over 200 people joined the long line and blocked off the main entrance of the building entirely.

"Don't push, don't push."

"Please line up and don't cut in line."

"They're about to open."

"Why are they taking so long? I've been here since 6 AM."

"Bro, I was here earlier than you. I heard that there were some others who came here even earlier than me."

"Ah? What time were they here since?"

"There was someone who arrived at 4:30 AM."

"Man, surely they couldn't have gone to such an extreme, right?"

"Why not? Who knows if we can even get hold of a copy of the book."

Everyone was chatting as they stood in line.

A passerby on his way to work was baffled at the sight. That person did not know what was going on, so he stopped in his tracks and had a look. "What are you guys lining up for? Did Hardshell Technologies release a new cell phone? Why didn't I hear about it? In any case, this isn't where the exclusive retail store is. It's over there. Why are you guys lining up at the entrance of the Bookstore?"

Someone in the line said, "We're lining up to buy a book."

That person said in surprise, "What book are you buying?"

A female student said, "Zhang Ye's Fortress Besieged!"

The passerby said in a startled voice, "What? Face-smacking Zhang has released a new novel?"

The girl nodded and said, "That's right. There're some rumors that this marriage-themed novel will contain some critical information about the identity of Zhang Ye's fiancée!"

"Damn, it's that interesting?" That passerby had a look of excitement in his eyes as he immediately ran to the back of the line and joined it silently.

It was finally the start of business hours.

When the main doors were unlocked and the passageway into the Bookstore was opened up, the staff were stunned by what they saw. They could only watch as shadows came rushing toward them. Some of the female staff were scared stiff and had their jaws drop. They did not know at all what was happening!

The crowd rushed straight into the Bookstore!

"Where is it?"

"Over there!"

"I can see the bookshelves!"

"I want a copy of Fortress Besieged!"

"Give me ten copies! Pack them up!"

Only then did the staff members realize what was going on. When they finally came back to their senses, the shelves where Fortress Besieged was placed were already emptied out. Only a bare promo board was left standing!

"Why are they all gone?"

"My God, I was here since 6 AM!"

"There must still be some stock left in the warehouse!"

An executive of the Bookstore was also alerted. He came downstairs dumbfounded by the happenings and quickly said, "Calm down, everyone, calm down. I've already gotten someone to transfer more stock from our warehouse. The books will be here immediately!"

...

Shanghai.

At Xinhua Bookstore.

"I want a copy of Fortress Besieged!"

"Give me two copies, thank you!"

"Fortress Besieged!"

"Why did they limit the amount that we can purchase?"

"Each person can only purchase one copy? What kind of rule is that?"

...

Tianjin.

At the Liberation Bookstore.

"Do you still have a copy of Fortress Besieged?"

"There aren't any left."

"What's going on? I lined up for a very long time!"

"We only received 200 copies, and they've all sold out. Why don't you all go down to West Street and ask around to see if they still have any stock left."

"They don't have anything left at West Street. I just came over from there!"

...

Throughout the morning.

Crazy scenes like these played out at major bookstores around the

country.

Many of those working at the bookstores and booksellers were feeling a little dumbfounded. How was this called book buying? This was clearly book snatching! Fortress Besieged was available as a single volume book and had a very high word count. Together with Zhang Ye's reputation, the publishing firm had set a very high market price for the novel. But based on what they were experiencing, it seemed like everyone was buying the book as though it did not cost a thing. They did not even browse through the contents or flip through the pages and simply picked up the novel before heading straight to the cashier!

The media was dumbfounded!

Many of the onlooking passersby were also dumbfounded!

Is this what Zhang Ye's appeal is like? Is he really that awesome? In all of China, which author could cause such a scene on the release date of their books!

At 10 AM, Fortress Besieged was sold out at 13 bookstores across the country!

At 10:30 AM, Fortress Besieged was sold out at 35 bookstores across the country!

At 11 AM, Fortress Besieged was sold out at 57 bookstores across the country!

The stock of Fortress Besieged was decreasing!

Some of the booksellers who had gone out of stock even called Zhang Ye's Studio in their anxiety.

At the studio.

Little Wang was on the phone. "We don't carry any stock of the book here....Right, you can get in contact with the publisher and distributor....It's no use even if you tell me about it; we're not in charge of this matter." After hanging up, Little Wang didn't know

whether to laugh or cry. She told everyone, "A bookseller just called to ask for a thousand copies of the book."

Wu Yi said excitedly, "The demand is too explosive!"

Ha Qiqi laughed out loud and said, "Looks like we absolutely need not worry about the sales!"

Zhang Zuo came back in a hurry from outside and panted, "You guys should really go out there and have a look. It's crazy in the bookstore across from us! It's packed with people!"

Even Zhang Ye got butterflies in his stomach. "Surely it can't be that popular, right?"

Noticing his disbelief, Zhang Zuo quickly said, "It's true, you can go and have a look for yourself!"

Zhang Ye said, "The promo campaigns haven't even fully run yet and the release was done so hurriedly, so how could we have sold that much?"

Ha Qiqi laughed and said, "That's because you didn't consider your reputation. If it were some random dude, they definitely couldn't achieve this. But who are you? You're the best writer among the celebrities and the most famous person among the authors. Moreover, this marriage-themed novel arrived just in time to coincide with your own marriage too. On top of all that, the winners of the Qilu Literature Prize will be announced today. With *Fortress Besieged* also nominated for the Qilu Literature Prize, the popularity of the book has been pushed to a high point."

Then, Zhang Ye's cell phone rang.

Zhang Ye answered the call from Yao Jiancai.

"Old Yao, what's up?"

"Why can't I get a copy of your novel?"

"Ah?"

"My daughter intended to get it, but it was already sold out at all

three of the bookstores she went to!"

"Hai, I didn't expect it'd sell so well on the first day."

"Don't say anything else, you just need to quickly get me ten copies of your novel right now."

"Whoa, I don't have that many copies on hand either. The publishing firm didn't bring over that many. I can at most spare you three copies. As for rest, we'll talk about it again when I get excess stock."

"Alright, three copies is fine too. I'll get my wife to go over to your studio and get it from you later. Mimi can't wait to get her hands on it."

"Alright."

Then the doorbell rang.

Little Wang, who was standing closest to the door, opened it.

Chenchen walked in. "Zhang Ye."

Zhang Ye said, "What are you doing here? I'm busy and don't have time for you."

Chenchen pouted and ignored him. Her little eyes looked over to the stack of Fortress Besieged books sealed and neatly placed in a corner of the studio. She walked over and put five copies into her arms.

Zhang Ye stared at her. "What are you doing?"

Chenchen said nonchalantly, "People want a copy of your novel."

Zhang Ye chuckled, "Who?"

Chenchen pointed downstairs. "Old Sun and Old Zhou. They said they didn't manage to buy it."

Old Sun? Did she mean Grandpa Sun?

Old Zhou? Was she talking about Uncle Zhou?

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "Take the copies then."

Chenchen hurried away.

A short while later, the little kid came back again.

Zhang Ye said in a speechless manner, "What are you doing here again?"

Chenchen said, "Zhang Ye, give me another 20 copies."

However, Zhang Ye noticed an awkward bulge in her pocket and could not help but grow suspicious. "What's that in your pocket?"

Chenchen clutched her pocket. "It's none of your business."

"Hey, let me see." Zhang Ye went up to her and searched through her pocket.

"Leave me alone!" Chenchen wasn't having any of it, but Zhang Ye overpowered her with his strength. An item fell out from her pocket.

Everyone saw exactly 250 yuan in cash fall out!

Chenchen could only say, "I sold your books at 50 yuan each at the entrance of the neighborhood. It's higher than your market price. Zhang Ye, give me another 20 copies."

Zhang Ye was floored. "Your sister, are you replenishing your stock from me!"

Everyone burst into laughter!

She even knew how to markup the price?

They had never come across such a young scalper before!

But from this, it showed how popular Fortress Besieged was. It was really selling like crazy!

Chapter 1208: How can such a person exist?

Later that afternoon.

At Eastern Publishing Firm.

The phone lines were constantly ringing, but the staff were no longer trying to answer every call!

"The stores are pressing us for more books again!"

"The Bookstore wants to order another 4,000 copies of Fortress Besieged!"

"There isn't any leftover stock that we can ship out from the first print. Increase the print run!"

"We've already contacted the production line to do so!"

"Aiyo, this release has gotten way too explosive, my God!"

"200,000 copies of the first print and we're already sold out?"

"How can that be possible?"

"Why would it not be possible? The various major bookstores have relayed the statistics back to us. The sales for Fortress Besieged have emptied their inventories by 70%. Going by this rate, we'll be out of stock by tonight! 200,000 copies sold in a day? In the publishing world, there has never been anyone who managed this before!"

200,000 copies for the first print run, this was really not a low figure!

For most new authors, a first print run of 10,000 to 20,000 copies was very common. Publishers would tend to only raise that figure to 100,000 copies for best-selling authors and would use that figure for a year's worth of projected sales. The publishing industry was experiencing a slump as the impact from various online publishers were having a great effect. If a novel could sell 100,000 copies a year, it would be considered a very popular title. However, no one

at Eastern Publishing Firm could have expected that even with 200,000 copies of Fortress Besieged printed for its first run, it was still not enough to last them a day of sales!

This was crazy!

This was totally crazy!

Over there, a female editor was fast walking over.

Everyone looked at her with smiles on their faces.

"Little Li!"

"Well done!"

"You've made a great contribution again!"

"Editor Li, you're looking great!"

Someone even led a round of applause for her!

Li Mei was a little embarrassed. "It's all to the credit of Teacher Zhang for trusting us with his book. I didn't really do much at all."

Li Mei was the newbie from the publishing firm who had struck the deal with Zhang Ye back then. At that time, Zhang Ye had just fallen out with his previous publisher and many of the other publishers were trying to sign him. Eastern Publishing Firm stood no chance of getting him as they were not well-known and were considered a small-time publishing firm in the industry. So they just sent an inexperienced employee to handle the negotiation to try to convince Zhang Ye to sign with them. To the expectations of no one, Li Mei managed to convince Zhang Ye and even got along very well with his mother. Afterwards, all of his works related to publishing were given to Li Mei to handle. In these past two years, the relationship worked fine without any hiccups. Many of the other publishers kept trying to headhunt Zhang Ye in the hopes that they could get a slice of the pie. But they could not understand why Zhang Ye kept choosing to work with Eastern Publishing Firm only and never once gave the rights of his books to any of the other

publishing firms. It was also the same for Fortress Besieged!

Li Mei had now become a very reputable person in the publishing industry!

Ever since then, Eastern Publishing Firm had gained a firm foothold in the industry!

At the editor-in-chief's office.

Li Mei cautiously knocked on the door and went in. "Editor-in-Chief, you're looking for me?"

The editor-in-chief looked at her and clasped his hands with a smile. "Little Li, you're here? Quick, take a seat. What would you like to drink? I have some rather good tea here."

Li Mei anxiously waved her hands at that. "That's not necessary, that's really not necessary."

The editor-in-chief laughed heartily. "Have you seen the sales figures for Fortress Besieged yet?"

"Yes." Li Mei was quite happy with the results too.

"You're really great!" The editor-in-chief said in a pleased tone, "I didn't think we could get it again, but who could've guessed that Teacher Zhang would still let us have the publication rights to his new book!"

Li Mei said, "Teacher Zhang is actually very easy to talk to. He's not as ill-tempered as rumored. As long as we do well in our work with him, he won't switch publishers so easily. He's not extremely particular about the royalty fees either. A little more or a little less doesn't matter to him. That's just how he is."

"It was you who handled his account well." The editor-in-chief said with a smile, "How long have you been working at the firm?"

Li Mei counted. "Over three years."

The editor-in-chief nodded. "Upper management has decided to give you a promotion."

Li Mei was taken aback. "Ah?"

The editor-in-chief smiled. "Starting from tomorrow, you will be in charge of the Distribution Department."

Distribution Department?

In charge of it?

Li Mei was stunned!

...

The sales for Fortress Besieged blew up!

During the day, many people opened the book to read it as soon as they got their hands on it.

Sometimes, a book wasn't a good read even though it sold well, because a myriad of factors affected the sales figure of a book, like the promotional material or the fame of the author. Fortress Besieged had sold so crazily well because of Zhang Ye's popularity. Just like if Zhang Yuanqi or one of those seven Heavenly Kings and Queens released a book, their sales would definitely not be bad. But as for how good the book really was, that depended on the content inside.

At Peking University.

Yao Jiancai's daughter, Yao Mi, came running back to her dormitory.

"I've got 'em!"

"How many do you have?"

"My mom sent three books!"

"Give me one!"

"I want one too!"

"I wonder if it's any good."

"This is our Chinese Department's teacher's book you're talking

about, how can it not be good!" Even though she said that, Yao Mi wasn't very sure of it either. Zhang Ye was dabbling for the first time in longform literary fiction about marriage. Compared to the Ghost Blows Out the Light that he had written, it was an entirely different genre. Yao Mi did not really know how good this book was.

So they sat down in the dormitory and started reading it together.

They spent the next few hours reading.

All of a sudden, one of her roommates yelled, "Heavens!"

Yao Mi was also very surprised. "Th-This is such a good read!"

A girl next to her said, "What do you mean by a good read? That's such a plain description! It's simply not enough to describe this book!"

Yao Mi asked, "Then how would you describe it?"

The girl declared, "This is a fucking godly read!"

That's right!

It was a godly read!

The few of them felt a sense of extreme shock!

...

At Zhang Xia's house.

Grandma Zhang was sitting back in her chair and reading a book.

Her nearby son called for her to take her medicine several times, but she did not hear him.

"Mom."

"Ah?"

"It's time to take your medicine."

"Oh, alright."

"What are you reading? You look lost in it."

"Hur hur, it's called Fortress Besieged."

"Zhang Ye's new book? Is it good?"

Zhang Xia hesitated for a moment before giving the most appropriate evaluation she could think of. "It's not a matter of it being good or bad, it's a shocking read!"

Her son said, "Then I'll read it too."

But Zhang Xia laughed and said, "You're such a restless person and have been so ignorant about things since childhood, so I doubt you'll be able to understand the intricacies and cultured language contained in this book. Such a book can only be written by someone with great wisdom. Little Zhang is really surprising. If he ever decides to venture into the literary circle, he would probably shock a great deal of foreigners. I believe that they don't yet know about this great talent that has emerged in China."

After taking her medicine, Zhang Xia continued reading Fortress Besieged. She sat there reading for the entire day.

...

At a certain author's studio.

The author, Chen Xian, also received a copy of the book. Someone from his studio brought it back for him, but he threw it aside without reading it.

"Teacher Chen, about tonight's Qilu Literature Prize..."

"Just leave it to fate, it's out of our control."

"You have a very good chance of winning."

"Hopefully, but it's difficult to say until the very end."

"Do you think that Zhang Ye has any hopes of winning?"

"Well, can he write literary fiction?"

Chen Xian just shook his head. In the field of poetry, there was

probably no one who could outdo Zhang Ye in the whole of the literary field. This had been verified time and again. But when it came to novel writing, especially longform literary fiction, no one would be afraid of Zhang Ye. That was because no one had ever seen him write anything like this before, so they did not take him seriously. It was only due to the controversy surrounding the Yanhong Literary Prize that the Qilu Literature Prize committee had nominated him. It was simply a nomination, so of course they wouldn't award the prize to him.

But when he received a call, Chen Xian felt a sense of unease come over him.

It was his old friend on the line.

"Old Yu?"

"Chen Xian, did you get a copy of Fortress Besieged yet?"

"I have one, what's the matter?"

"Have you read it yet?"

"Why would I want to read it?"

There was a two-second pause on the other end. "I suggest that you give it a read."

Chen Xian was startled. "...Alright."

After hanging up, he immediately found the book and flipped to the first page.

An hour later, Chen Xian's expression had completely changed. After he closed the book, he took a deep breath and tasted a bitterness in his throat, like he had taken some Chinese traditional medicine!

Could he write literary fiction?

Thinking of this question he posed earlier, he already knew the answer!

That's right!

He really could write it!

Chen Xian had been stunned. Even if he was one of those from the literary circle who denounced Zhang Ye several years ago, even if he was extremely biased against Zhang Ye, he was still very shocked by this book!

How can such a book exist?

How can such a person exist?

Chapter 1209: Ascending to the altar!

At night.

7 PM sharp.

All the major bookstores across the country had sent in their statistics. The premiere release of 200,000 copies of *Fortress Besieged* was wiped clean at 6:57 PM. Not a single copy was left on the shelves in the market!

The publishing world was shaken to its core!

The industry was also in an uproar!

Who said that the publishing industry was in a slump?

Who said that physical books were already a thing of the past?

Faced with a book whose sales figures rocketed to the stars, many of the publishing firms hurriedly held meetings. A lot of authors who hadn't intended to read this book were now flipping through it in curiosity. Some netizens were even pleading to buy it off others by offering up to a 100 yuan for the book. It had become a very sought after book on the market!

Then, all kinds of book reviews started appearing!

Fortress Besieged dumbfounded the entire Chinese literary field!

Classic Quotes:

1. If the poem has any meaning, so much the worse for it.
2. You're not annoying, but you're completely useless.
3. Life, it's been said, is one big book. Should life indeed be so, most of us writers can only claim to be book critics. Possessing the book critic's skill, we need not read more than a few pages to churn out a pile of commentary and wrap up a book review in no time.
4. If a person does not go out to see the world by 20, he is a failure; by the same token, if he is still out seeing the world at 30,

he is a failure.

5. Nothing happens on accident. The different masks we wear make it inevitable.

6. Husbands are women's careers. Not having a husband is like being unemployed.

And so on and so forth.

Every word contained in Fortress Besieged, every sentence, every line was crazily picked out by people who dissected and studied them until they couldn't help but call it wonderful!

On Weibo.

The netizens were passionate and excited!

"How godly! So godly!"

"Any sentence found in the book can be considered a classic!"

"It's so good that I'm crying!"

"Is this really what Zhang Ye's literary novel is like?"

"Damn, this is the most awesome book I've ever read!"

"I can see all the goosebumps that I'm getting!"

"Your sister, who said that there was a great reveal of Mrs. Zhang inside the book!"

"Pfft, previous poster, did you really believe that?"

"I also never expected that Fortress Besieged would actually be like this. I thought this was a pure romance novel. Isn't Teacher Zhang not yet married? Pfft, why do I feel like he's going to get divorced? Look at what he wrote in his book, describing marriage as a grave of love. I wonder if Teacher Zhang will get a beating from Mrs. Zhang tonight!"

"Hahaha, he deserves it if he does!"

"Supporting Mrs. Zhang Ye, make him kneel on a washboard!"

"What a godly book this is! And what a godly author!"

"Fortress Besieged is great!"

"Motherfucker, I've been pulled into Zhang Ye's fan base!"

"Me too. Fortress Besieged has fucking left me with no resistance. Zhang Ye's skill at indoctrinating people into his fan base is too strong! He silently creeps up and gets us hooked without knowing! But I think my parents are even more fanatical than I am. Those two don't usually pay attention to anyone in showbiz but became Zhang Ye's fans after reading Fortress Besieged!"

"My grandma too!"

"I never used to read literary fiction since I didn't think I could appreciate it. But Fortress Besieged really is different from other works of literary fiction! This book is a drug!"

"I'm addicted to it as well!"

"I've read many of the other books that were shortlisted for the Qilu Literature Prize, but none of them are comparable to Fortress Besieged. Could Zhang Ye really win this highest honor?"

"Who knows? He should have gotten the Yanhong Literary Prize, but his relationship with the literary world is just no good!"

"So what if it's not good? Just with Fortress Besieged, even if Zhang Ye fucking points right at those people from the literary circle and scolds them, he should still win the award! This book is really amazing. Even if they don't like him in the literary field, even if he has offended many authors before, they must still award it to him!"

"I suppose the literary field is dumbfounded!"

"Fortress Besieged is a killing blow!"

...

At the studio.

News from all over the place was being reported back.

Ha Qiqi and the others were constantly getting good news and feeling excited and inspired!

"It's sold out!"

"The number of reservations have broken records too!"

"Its popularity is growing exponentially!"

They sorted the information into a chart for Zhang Ye to look at. The number of Zhang Ye's Weibo followers soared yet again, as well as all other aspects of his popularity.

Even though this was not really an important statistic, it solved a problem. Most of Zhang Ye's newly gained followers were the middle-aged to the elderly and were more learned people. Fortress Besieged helped him attract a large number of new fans! This was certainly good news for him. There were always limitations for every celebrity's fan base. Some celebrities, like the Korean celebs, focused only on the younger crowd for their target audiences. Meanwhile, others like Dong Shanshan targeted male otakus, with a large number of them making up their fanbases. Zhang Ye's fan base spanned a relatively larger demographic. There were men and women, people in their teens, twenties, and even thirties. But attracting new male and female fans in their forties and fifties or even older was a very rare occurrence!

If a celebrity's fanbase demographic coverage was smaller, it meant their growth potential was limited.

A celebrity who only targeted young teens would probably end up as only an A-list celebrity. Even if they could attract half the country's teen audience as fans, that number would still be limited. Similarly, a celebrity who only targeted either men or women would also find their growth limited as they progressed further up the entertainment circle. Their fanbase would become saturated by their target audience as no new fans would join.

Therefore, the coverage of one's fanbase was very important!

Fortress Besieged had undoubtedly helped Zhang Ye open up a new channel of fans. This new group of fans was really important for him to raise his popularity. If he wanted to break past the A-list and take one of the seven spots above him, the first thing he needed to lose was an "imbalanced" fanbase. Otherwise, he would have already lost at the starting line!

It was almost 8 PM.

Weibo fell silent.

Everyone in Zhang Ye's Studio also fell silent.

This was because it was almost time for the Qilu Literature Prize winners to be announced. Countless people across the country switched on their radios and quietly listened in to Central Radio's broadcast.

Wu Yi was wiping off his nervous perspiration. "How nerve-wracking!"

Ha Qiqi clutched her chest. "Stop talking, you're making me nervous too!"

Little Wang couldn't listen and covered her ears.

Zhang Zuo and the others were staring at the radio in silence.

Zhang Ye was smoking at the window and waiting in anticipation as well. He had already done all that he could, even bringing that "atomic bomb" of the literary field, Fortress Besieged, from his previous world over to this world. Whatever happened next would depend on fate. Whether his plan to reach the summit could be carried out smoothly in the short term depended on the results of this award!

The awarding method for the Qilu Literature Prize was different from the other two literary awards. It was the top literary award among the three and also the most special. In all decades until

now, the Qilu Literature Prize had been awarded based on tradition. The winners were always announced over the radio to the public, and there was neither an award ceremony nor any trophies given out. However, the voice announcing the results was always intriguing to all of those from the literary arena and was the most sacred moment for the literary field!

The broadcast started.

The people were heatedly discussing it.

Zhang Ye's parents had long since tuned in to the radio station on their cell phones.

Zhang Xia made her son take out a very old radio that he spent a long time fixing before getting to work again.

In the dormitories at Peking University, there were no sounds of games or music. Instead, from many rooms came the sounds of a century-old radio station.

Bzzt...Bzzt...

Static sounded for a moment.

Then the voice of the radio announcer came on without any unnecessary chatter. "Dear listeners, good evening. We will be announcing the five winners of the Qilu Literature Prize that is held once every four years. They will be revealed in ascending order of votes received—"

Zhang Ye extinguished his cigarette and came over.

Ha Qiqi almost stopped breathing.

Little Wang clasped her hands and prayed, "Let Director Zhang be on the list! Please!"

The radio announcer said, "Love by the Lake by Liu Tianqi."

Wu Yi exclaimed!

Ha Qiqi shushed him. "Quiet."

The judging panel had voted for the five winners, and the results were ranked in ascending order. The fifth place winner would be announced first, so there was no need to get too anxious.

The radio announcer said, "Spring Returns by Han Dong."

At Han Dong's home, his relatives all cheered!

"Second Uncle, it's you! It's you!"

"You got it! You've won!"

Han Dong also felt very excited!

The radio announcer: "Two Summer Days by Zhang Yi."

At Zhang Yi's home, her husband was howling. As a female author, winning the Qilu Literature Prize was the greatest affirmation she could get. When Zhang Yi realized she had won, she got so excited she had to take several aspirins to prevent a heart attack. Her hands were trembling!

The third winner had been announced!

There were only two left!

The radio announcer said, "Gentle Eyes by Zang Weiguo!"

At Zang Weiguo's home, his children and grandchildren reacted explosively around him!

When Zang Weiguo heard his name, he started crying. He finally won it. In the thirty years of hard work he put in, he had finally received this highest honor in exchange. Although he wasn't in first place, it was still enough to make him cry. He never thought that he would win first place and felt that it was a miracle that he could even win the Qilu Literature Prize!

There was only one spot left!

The winner with the most votes for this year's Qilu Literature Prize was going to be announced!

Little Wang was perspiring from the suspense!

Ha Qiqi was feeling extremely nervous!

Why wasn't it announced yet?

Why hadn't Director Zhang's name been mentioned yet?

Zhang Ye took a deep breath and closed his eyes.

Wu Yi stamped his feet impatiently. Quick! Announce it already!

The entire literary world was waiting for that last name to be announced!

Many of the citizens had pricked their ears up and were wide-eyed as they waited to find out who it was!

When this last name was about to be announced, the radio announcer paused for a moment before saying with a magnetic voice, "Fortress Besieged by Zhang Ye."

Silence was the only sound in the studio.

Little Wang then screamed!

"Ah!"

"He said Zhang Ye! He said Zhang Ye!"

"It's us! We've won!"

"We're first in the vote!"

"We've gotten it! We've gotten it!"

Screams!

Shouts!

The studio erupted!

Little Wang and a few of the female staff all threw their hands up as they cheered. One of them even got so emotional she cried!

Everyone was hugging one another, screaming and shouting. This really had not been easy. They had won this award with great difficulty! Two days. Zhang Ye had used just two days to dabble in the field of literary fiction to gain the highest honor in the literary

field this year by winning the most votes. This could only be described as a miracle and as a dream. Such a result could only be achieved by Zhang Ye!

Today, Zhang Ye had risen to the top of the Chinese literary world!

Zhang Ye and Fortress Besieged had ascended to the altar!

Chapter 1210: Director Zhang's creative process is particularly arduous!

Presently.

Congratulatory calls were coming in one after another.

Zhang Ye had taken the top honors in the Qilu Literature Prize!

Further, the Qilu Literature Prize was the highest honor in the field of literature!

He had won this award in the most perfect way. It was a best of the best performance and the highest of the highest prizes he had won. It was flawless, and there was nothing else in the Chinese literary world that was a greater honor!

Elder Qian called. "Congratulations, Little Zhang!"

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "Elder Qian, how can you do this? If you already knew that my name was on the winner's list, why didn't you tell me earlier? I was cooped up for the entire day at my studio with my colleagues anxiously worrying for me. Everyone thought that I wouldn't have a chance of winning. In any case, how did I end up getting first place for this year's Qilu Literature Prize? Who voted for me?"

Elder Qian said: "I don't know, actually. The voting process is anonymous; we place our votes into sealed boxes which are then handed to a professional to take care of. Once the voting is done, it's out of our judging panel's hands. I, too, found out that you took first place when I heard the announcement over the radio."

"Thank you."

"Don't thank me, it was the book that was good."

"Let me treat you to a meal someday."

"Haha, alright, I'll be waiting for it."

Following, a call from his mother arrived. She sounded very excited.

"Son, you're amazing!"

"Thanks, Mom."

"Your dad also sends his congratulations!"

"Alright, I'll continue to work hard."

Li Mei from Eastern Publishing Firm called as well.

"Brother Zhang, I'm calling to congratulate you on behalf of the publishing firm. The boss has asked me to convey his congratulations to you. And for me personally, I just want to say that you're really awesome!"

"Thank you."

"For the second edition's print run, we can add 'winner of the Qilu Literature Prize' to the cover. With this highest honor given to it, Fortress Besieged will fly even faster off the shelves!"

"Sure, I'll leave it to you all to plan."

"We've already started on it. Shall I send you the cover after we're done with the design?"

"There's no need, I trust you guys."

"Thank you, Brother Zhang!"

He received over a dozen calls!

Yao Jiancai, Zhang Xia, Dong Shanshan, Yu Yingyi, and many other close friends sent their congratulations!

The news was also reporting about it!

"Qilu Literature Prize winners' list announced!"

"Zhang Ye goes against all odds to take top honors!"

"Zhang Ye reaches summit by winning highest honor in literary field!"

"Yanhong Literary Prize suffers terrible face smacking!"

"The judging panel of the Yanhong Literary Prize expresses: No comment!"

"Fortress Besieged—a masterpiece on the topic of marriage!"

"Zhang Ye slaps the faces of the Yanhong Literary Prize committee: You want to ignore me today? Tomorrow you'll never measure up to my expectations!"

Congratulatory messages flooded Weibo!

"This is so impressive!"

"He really won it! And he even got first place!"

"Zhang Ye has ascended onto the altar!"

"He has taken yet another top honor! Zhang Ye's popularity is going to soar like crazy!"

"It's going to increase by a lot this time."

"Fortress Besieged is a well-deserved winner!"

"You're right. Even if Fortress Besieged won every domestic literary award there is, it wouldn't be an issue! Even if there are many people from the literary field who bear a grudge against Zhang Ye, this award must still be given to him! Alright, I won't say any more. I need to quickly get back to reading it again. I need to read it a few more times to grasp it fully!"

"So fast? I still haven't finished reading it!"

"I'll get back to reading it too! Congratulations to Lord Zhang!"

"Lord Zhang did not disappoint us!"

"The faces of Yanhong Literary Prize committee have probably turned green from anger!"

"Hahaha, those fools! When I think about that explanation the Yanhong Literary Prize committee gave, I can't help but laugh. They were saying that Zhang Ye did not have the qualifications to

win the Yanhong Literary Prize and came up with all kinds of reason to justify it. But in the end? He won the Qilu Literature Prize and slapped them so hard their faces became swollen! The Qilu Literature Prize is much more prestigious than your Yanhong Literary Prize! If the most coveted literary award in the country recognizes Zhang Ye and even gave him top honors, how can you people say that he's unqualified to win the Yanhong Literary Prize? What a joke!"

"One of the headlines in the news put it really well! 'You want to ignore me today? Tomorrow you'll never measure up to my expectations!' Hahaha, that's so cool!"

"I need to give a Like to the Qilu Literature Prize committee. They must have resisted a great deal of pressure to award the prize to Zhang Ye! This should also be an official acknowledgment of Zhang Ye by the literary circle, right?"

"Who cares if they acknowledge him or not? All I care about is whether I can get my hands on a copy of Fortress Besieged tomorrow!"

"Me too! I've been listening to you people praising it to the high heavens, yet I haven't even laid eyes on it!"

"This is killing me! Damn it, I should just go queue up at midnight!"

"Does anyone still have the first edition of Fortress Besieged? I'll buy it for a high price!"

"My advice to everyone is to not buy it in a hurry. See whether you like it first, as literary fiction is not something that everyone can appreciate. You might not be able to understand it."

"Fuck, this is the highest voted book that won the Qilu Literature Prize! Even if I don't understand it, I still must read it!"

"The majority of people can't even buy this book anymore!"

The people were heatedly discussing this!

News about it was appearing everywhere!

Industry insiders were also starting to react to this news!

Some industry peers were lauding Fortress Besieged and marveling at it. A lot of plot and word analysis of Fortress Besieged also appeared. Of course, there was no lack of criticism either. Some authors who had always despised Zhang Ye joined forces to nitpick and find fault with the novel. This included two old judges on the Yanhong Literary Prize committee. However, no one took these people's words seriously. A lot of people did not even care about them. The Qilu Literature Prize had acknowledged Zhang Ye, so it was meaningless for this group of people to say anything!

Why did they give him the award?

There was no why!

The fact was that they had given it to him!

...

On that same night.

The Qilu Literature Prize money arrived. It was just 50,000 RMB, no more, no less.

The five Qilu Literature Prize winners were "showered" with attention without exception by the media reporters. Of them, Zhang Ye was the most heavily "showered" upon.

The reporters were clogging the entrance of the studio!

"Teacher Zhang!"

"Are you around?"

"We're reporters from the Morning Post!"

"We're reporters from Beijing Television!"

"Please accept our interview!"

The door was not open, but they could still be heard from inside the studio.

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "Director Zhang, shall I go handle them?"

"Yes, I'll go and lie low." Zhang Ye was still on the line making calls. He spoke on the phone as he walked upstairs with a smile: "Teacher Su, thank you for your concern. Yes, the reporters are here."

The door opened and Little Wang ushered the reporters inside.

Ha Qiqi smiled. "Hi, everyone. Director Zhang still has some work to handle. I'm Zhang Ye's Studio's external communications manager, so you can all ask me questions if you have any."

The reporters immediately pushed their cameras and microphones to the front!

The Beijing Times reporter said, "Congratulations to Teacher Zhang for winning the highest domestic honor in literature!"

Ha Qiqi nodded. "Thank you."

A different reporter quickly asked, "Regarding the sales figures of Fortress Besieged, what kind of expectations did you all have?"

Ha Qiqi shook her head and said, "We really didn't have any expectations. We don't do estimates for such things, wanting to concentrate on completing whatever needs to be done, that's all. Director Zhang's own words for this book were to 'sell however much we can.' This is actually Director Zhang's first foray into writing this type of novel. It was an attempt at switching from genre fiction to literary fiction. So, to have gained the acknowledgment of the Qilu Literature Prize committee, that was something we hadn't expected at all."

A female reporter raised an audio recorder and asked, "We would like to know what the creative process for a literary novel is like. How long did it take for Teacher Zhang to conceptualize it? How many years did he take to produce it? Did he ever reach a bottleneck where he couldn't continue writing?"

The creative process?

How many years?

Ha Qiqi said, "The process was very arduous."

The female reporter asked curiously, "How arduous?"

Ha Qiqi cleared her throat and said, "It was particularly arduous."

Another television station's reporter followed up with, "So just how particularly arduous?"

Ha Qiqi said calmly with a straight face, "The process is not something that outsiders would understand, but just know that it was particularly arduous."

The corner of Little Wang's mouth twitched!

Wu Yi pretended to drink water and nearly even choked!

The studio's staff were all madly laughing on the inside!

Particularly arduous?

Particularly, my ass!

Arduous, my ass!

How was it arduous at all? When was there ever a bottleneck that made him unable to continue writing? Director Zhang just locked himself in his office and casually finished writing it in less than two days. He didn't even check for typos and sent it straight over to the publishing firm. If this was called arduous, what would it be like when it was not arduous?

Chapter 1211: Another increase in popularity!

In the morning.

After Zhang Ye woke up, he drove over to Old Wu's parent's place to bring them the good news.

When he passed by a bookstore at the road outside their alley, it was just opening for the day. Immediately, more than 30 youths who were lining up outside rushed in like they were going to attempt to rob the store!

"Fortress Besieged!"

"I want a copy!"

"Do you have any left?"

"What? Why not?"

"I was here since yesterday!"

"Boss, why didn't you guys bring in more stock!"

"I'm so tired of this. Why is it so hard for me to be able to read a book I want!"

"My dad ordered me to buy a copy home. Hai, how am I going to find a copy for him? Well, whatever, I guess I'll go elsewhere and ask around."

"The stock should stabilize by tomorrow. Right now, a lot of people are surely looking to buy Fortress Besieged for their book collection since it's just won an important award. But that'll slowly die down in several more days."

"Hopefully."

"Then I guess I'll wait another day or two."

Some of the bookstores were out of stock.

Some others were sold out the moment they opened for business.

On this morning, such events were unfolding throughout the country.

Zhang Ye walked toward the alley happy. Hearing all the praise and discussion by everyone about Fortress Besieged, he was feeling really happy for himse—for Comrade [Qian Zhongshu](#)!

At the courtyard house.

Zhang Ye pushed open the door and entered. "Auntie, Uncle."

Li Qinqin had just come out to the courtyard to fetch some water. When she heard Zhang Ye's voice, she broke into a smile. "Little Ye, you're here? Go into the house quick, we're all waiting for you for breakfast. It's already been made."

Zhang Ye went up to offer his help. "Auntie, let me do it."

Li Qinqin said, "No, no, leave it to me. You're a famous author now."

"What famous author?" Zhang Ye laughed and said, "No matter what awards I receive, I'll always be your son."

Li Qinqin smiled. "I love hearing that."

Wu Zeqing also came out of the house. She smiled and said, "You're here?"

Zhang Ye waved and said, "Hey, Old Wu."

Wu Zeqing said, "Quickly come in, my dad is getting steamed up over you."

In the Beijing dialect, to be steamed up means to be angry.

Zhang Ye was startled. "What's wrong with Uncle?"

In the house, Wu Changhe grumbled with a copy of Fortress Besieged next to his hand, "What do you think is wrong? My daughter hasn't even gotten married to you yet and you're already expressing despair about marriage?" He was wearing his reading

glasses and holding up the book, flipping through the pages. Many of the pages were bookmarked and the contents highlighted, then underlined with red or blue ink. Clearly, he had done a lot of reading and research. "Look at this paragraph here, then this paragraph over here. You rascal, how did you come up with so many flirtatious and scheming plots? You're not sincere at all! You are totally not sincere at all!"

Zhang Ye nearly fainted. "Uncle, it's just a novel, none of it is real."

Li Qinqin chuckled and said, "Little Ye, don't worry about your uncle. He just has nothing better to do than nitpick. He didn't even put your book down once the entire night."

Wu Changhe harrumphed, "The book is good, but the author is really dishonest!"

Zhang Ye didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Old Qian (Zhongshu).

Someone is scolding you.

Wu Zeqing said calmly, "He's writing satire. You're a person from the Go world, so don't go around involving yourself with the literary world. You don't understand them anyway."

Zhang Ye also explained, "Uncle, don't you worry. I'm full of hope when it comes to marriage and really don't have those kinds of thoughts at all. It's not like I went digging for some emperor's grave even though I wrote a grave robbing novel, right? It's only a novel. No matter how real it sounds, it's still made up."

He finally got past it with this explanation.

Everyone sat down to have breakfast together. After the meal, Zhang Ye quickly helped out with the chores like washing the dishes and wiping down the table in an attempt to impress his elders. Finally, he even used his future father-in-law's account to play a few games of Go on his behalf and thrashed several of the 9-

dan experts from China Qiyuan. Only then did his future father-in-law start to look happier!

Hai, do you think life is easy for this bro!

Over the next few days.

Zhang Ye treated his friends and colleagues to meals every day. In total, he attended around seven gatherings. Although they said it was to celebrate him, it was actually just a chance for them to get together and catch up over food and drinks.

The sales of Fortress Besieged continued to hold up very well.

Every batch of books from each print run that Eastern Publishing Firm ran sold out the moment they left the presses. Moreover, the print factories were also putting in overtime every day in order to ship out the goods!

The Eastern Publishing Firm's staff were seemingly celebrating the new year every day. Everyone was walking on air and even felt like they would float into the sky if the windows got opened.

"Boss, we still don't have enough to meet demand!"

"Add another print run!"

"It's too popular! There's no sign of the sales slowing!"

"The demand for it hasn't reached saturation yet! Print more! Print however much more they ask for!"

"Teacher Zhang Ye is amazing!"

"That's right, add an additional print run for Ghost Blows Out the Light and Legend of Wukong. Use this opportunity where Teacher Zhang has climbed to the summit with that newly gained honor to sell another wave of those books!"

"Alright, I'll get in touch with the printers right now!"

200,000 copies!

300,000 copies!

400,000 copies!

The sales figures were so explosive that it dumbfounded many book publishers and people in the literary field. Are you people fucking intending to break the record set by Ghost Blows Out the Light? Ghost Blows Out the Light was a genre fiction novel that was specifically written to appeal to the market. Bu Fortress Besieged? Yes, Zhang Ye was extremely popular, and Fortress Besieged had also won the highest honor of the Chinese literary world. But when you boil it down, this was just a literary novel!

Selling well on the first day? That was normal!

Still selling well on the second day? Acceptable!

But it was still selling like hotcakes on the third and fourth days?

Even with such a large supply of books, it was not enough to satisfy the crazed book buyers? And it was even difficult to get? This was too scary! There was no comparison between genre fiction and literary fiction when it came to artistic merit. Similarly, a literary novel could never compare in terms of sales to genre fiction. However, Fortress Besieged seemed to be the exception. Be it its literary standards, the praise heaped upon it, the award it won, or even its sales figures, all of it was top notch. It had broken many of the known stereotypes in the industry, and many of the analyses and experiences of experts were no longer applicable to Zhang Ye!

Quite a lot of literary figures were getting jealous!

Why?

Based on what?

He could win an award and the book was selling so well too?

Why could he enjoy the best of both worlds!

When the other four literary masters who had also won the Qilu Literature Prize learned about this, they got inspired!

Has literary fiction become popular?

Has spring arrived for literary novels?

On the day itself, the publishing firms they were working with reprinted and promoted their award-winning books on a large scale. This was standard industry practice as they wanted to bank on the momentum from winning the award to sell another wave of books. The publishing firms needed to make a living, and so did the authors. Who would ever think they had earned enough money? Seeing how insanely Fortress Besieged was selling, they wanted to get a slice of the pie too!

But when the four literary masters' books got restocked on the shelves, a lot of people were dumbfounded to find out that those winners' books had a completely different experience from Fortress Besieged!

One of the books had 50,000 copies reprinted, but only managed to sell one-third of the copies after two days!

Another one had a print run of 20,000 copies and still did not sell out after three days!

Nobody knew whether to laugh or cry. So it wasn't the market that had changed. There was no spring coming for literary novels. It was just Fortress Besieged that was on fire, it was just Zhang Ye who was on fire!

Zhang Ye was indeed on fire again!

Not only in terms of popularity, but also overall statistics!

In the latest updated Chinese Celebrity Rankings Index, on the day after Zhang Ye won the Qilu Literature Prize, he gained another increase to his overall popularity score. It wasn't just a gain in a single aspect of his popularity but an overall surge. This was the effect of winning the highest honor. It was a percent increase accumulated and gained toward the overall popularity score. Moreover, the Qilu Literature Prize was different from the

other awards. The highest honors in the literary world could only be won once by an author in their lifetime. Thus, the value of such awards were even greater and the percent increase would similarly be greater. It was probably even greater than the combination of the popularity scores gained from the variety shows' highest honor and the documentaries' highest honor combined! This was also the reason for so many celebrities to chase after those prestigious awards. If they could accumulate enough of said gains, it would be a colossal number! Honors, awards, fanbase, number of works, fame, all of those contributed to the total popularity scores of every celebrity! The Chinese Celebrity Rankings Index was also an aggregate chart. If a celebrity wanted to ascend to one of those seven spots in the entertainment industry, it depended on their overall popularity scores!

And so, with the bonus from winning the award, and including the rising sales figures of Fortress Besieged, Zhang Ye's popularity sprang up by quite a lot again!

He was getting even closer to those seven spots!

The first and second milestones of the "Reach the Summit" plan had been reached!

Chapter 1212: A great harvest from the lottery draw!

On this day.

The sun was shining and the autumn wind blowing.

Zhang Ye was finally done entertaining everyone and took half a day off to rest. The celebratory feasts, the gatherings, handling the reporters, holding autograph signing book events, all these activities had left him totally exhausted. Just the signing event alone required him to sign no less than 500 books. But as Zhang Ye wanted to quickly reach the position of the seven spots, and with his milestones of the plan to reach the summit fully lined up with barely any breaks in between, Zhang Ye could only give himself half a day off with only two milestones completed and the third and fourth ones coming up immediately.

He had no choice.

All of this was so he could reach the top in China.

Even though he called it a break, he actually intended to use this half day to do something very important. With this large chunk of free time and his game ring's Reputation Points reaching an astronomical figure that he only occasionally used to activate the Lucky Halo and buy Memory Search Capsules with, he had no idea how long he had not played the lottery draw. He hadn't added to his Stats and Special Category items for a long time. So he had to make the best of the time he had to restock. This was also to give himself a better foundation for what was to come in his plan to reach the summit. After all, to forge iron, one must be strong. Having more skills would not be a burden and he was still lacking in many areas. Who would ever dislike being good at many things?

His parents had been out since early morning, but he didn't know where they had gone. In order to get luckier, Zhang Ye showered

and washed himself from head to toe. He washed just his hands alone five times until his skin almost came off.

It was about enough.

He took the opportunity to call Wu Zeqing as well.

It connected after only two rings.

"Old Wu, what are you doing?"

"I'm at work."

"Have you had breakfast yet?"

"I ate at home."

"By the way, give me a kiss?"

"What's the matter?"

"To give me some luck, come on now."

"Hur hur, but I'm working."

"Aiyo, just secretly give me a kiss."

"There're people around."

"Oh, then it's fine, go do your work."

A short while after hanging up, his cell phone text message tone sounded. Zhang Ye took a look and saw that Wu Zeqing had sent him a photo. It did not show her entire face, and even her nose could not be seen in the picture. All the photo showed was two red lips puckered in an elegant and graceful manner.

It was so tempting!

Zhang Ye's fantasies were stirred!

Di di.

Old Wu texted: "Is that fine?"

Zhang Ye typed: "Haha, that's good enough!"

"Why do you need luck?"

Zhang Ye replied: "I have important business."

Zhang Ye threw the phone onto the sofa and rubbed his hands together, then took a deep breath before opening up the game ring's interface to look at his total Reputation Points. It was ridiculously high! The long string of numbers dazzled Zhang Ye, and he didn't hesitate as he activated the Lucky Halo (Upgraded). He was going to leave it activated all the time without caring about the idle time in between his lottery draws. This bro could afford it....Forget it, it was probably better to be more prudent.

Which lottery draw should he go for first?

Alright, Lottery Draw (Two) then!

He opened up Lottery Draw (Two) and a virtual slot machine appeared out of thin air. Zhang Ye did not even think before placing five additional stakes costing a total of 50 million Reputation Points!

Zhang Ye had known Lottery Draw (Two)'s additional stakes function for a long time. But he'd never used it much as he was reluctant to do so. He preferred to save the Reputation Points since he did not use to have much. Lottery Draw (Two) cost 10 million Reputation Points each time he played it, and the rate of getting an "Empty" Treasure Chest (Medium) was very high as well. If he was unlucky, he would have ended up with nothing at all. But now that he had so many Reputation Points accumulated, he was much more emboldened. Further, there was also the Lucky Halo (Upgraded) to bring up his chances. Without even batting an eyelid, 50 million Reputation Points were spent just like that!

The lottery draw began!

The slot machine started moving!

One spin.

Three spins.

Five spins.

Zhang Ye closed his eyes and did not watch.

Finally, the prizes were dispensed!

He heard some jingling sounds as five golden medium treasure chests fell out. Zhang Ye nervously and expectantly opened up the five treasure chests.

They were items from the Consumption Category!

All five were the same items!

[Spring Water of Health] × 5: Heals physical injuries and sickness.

In Lottery Draw (Two), the chances of getting an item from the Consumption Category were very low. Zhang Ye could only remember getting the 1-Up item during his first try at the Lottery Draw (Two), but did not come across this category in his future draws. This was because the items in the Consumption Category for the Lottery Draw (Two) were all extremely precious items.

Spring Water of Health?

Heals injuries and sickness?

That sounded really awesome!

And this Spring Water of Health was probably part of a set with the 1-Up as well? The item description for the 1-Up was quite ambiguous. From what he could understand, if any fatal injuries were inflicted on Zhang Ye, the 1-Up should revive him. But whether he would be revived to a state where he was full of vim and vigor was another matter. That sort of godly item was quite unlikely to be found in the Treasure Chest (Medium), though it might be possible to gain such an item from the Treasure Chest (Large). However, now that he had gotten the Spring Water of Health in addition to his 1-Up, it was going to be the ultimate combination. The 1-Up would be responsible for saving his life, while the Spring Water of Health would restore him to full health. Boys and girls together, the work gets lighter.

The only issue was that the effect of this item was unknown.

Oh yes, weren't his own internal injuries still not completely healed? Those old injuries he suffered at the martial arts conference had flared up once during his participation in the King of Masked Singers. Although Zhang Ye closely followed the prescription given to him by Rao Aimin and took the medicine religiously for quite a period of time, he did not really dare to use his concealed power in all these months. He was afraid to aggravate his injuries again, and according to Rao Aimin, it was very difficult to fully recover from injuries that were inflicted by concealed power and would require long-term recuperation. So Zhang Ye was bound by his hands and legs most of the time when it came to situations that required him to do something with his powers. He was afraid that it would cause more trouble at a critical moment if he were to take action and then aggravate the injury once more.

This item had arrived quite timely!

After temporarily deactivating his Lucky Halo, Zhang Ye picked up a bottle of Spring Water of Health and gulped it down while pinching his nose.

Eh? Why does it taste so good?

It tasted sweet. Then he could feel his body heating up.

The aftereffects lasted about ten minutes before Zhang Ye slowly wondered if there was any recovery. He moved his arms around and found that he was in an extremely good state of mind. It was as though his whole person was shining, and that feeling was like waking up from a particularly fulfilling sleep without the need to go to work and being able to stretch once awake!

He moved his hands and threw several punches imbued with concealed power!

Huu!

Huu!

His punches even whooshed through the air!

Zhang Ye was ecstatic. He had recovered! His old injuries had really disappeared!

He wondered if this Spring Water of Health would work on anyone else other than him. It wasn't mentioned in the item description, so Zhang Ye wasn't sure. Oh, Rao Aimin's old injuries were even more serious than his, and then there was Qiu Yumei too. Could this thingy heal Sister Qiu's legs? If it could, then wouldn't that be defying all common sense?

Cold and fever.

Broken hands and legs.

Were all these included under injuries and sickness?

Eh, could it treat stuttering? Alright, that was enough thinking for now.

Zhang Ye was very excited. He really hadn't washed his hands for nothing. Old Wu's kiss was not for nothing either. Taking advantage of this lucky streak, he continued to play the lottery and activated the Lucky Halo (Upgraded) once more!

Come on!

Come on!

Keep going like this!

He was playing more and more rounds of the lottery draw. This fellow was completely unable to stop!

The accumulated Reputation Points were finally starting to drop!

[Fruit of Charm]

[Singing Skill Experience Book]

[Basics of Directing Skill Experience Book]

[Higher Mathematics Skill Experience Book]

[Lock Picking Skill Experience Book]

[Computer Programming Skills - Network Technology Experience Book]

[Computer Programming Skills Experience Book]

How coincidental. Many of the items he was getting from the lottery draw today were items he had gotten in the past. Zhang Ye was randomly adding additional stakes every time he played, so he had a lot of some items and very little of others. Like the Lock Picking Skill Experience Books. He had received this item not long after he gained the game ring system. Then the item was put to good use during the plane hijacking incident soon afterwards. At that time, he had "eaten" too few of those experience books, so it was now time to add on. It was the same for the Computer Programming Skills Experience Books and Computer Programming Skills - Network Technology Experience Books. Although he had "eaten" a lot of those, the Treasure Chest (Medium) skill experience books were not capped. He could continue "eating" more of them. Along with those, he was also able to strengthen his directing, singing, and higher mathematics skills. He also gained some Fruits of Charm that were very important for a celebrity like him, but it was unfortunate that there weren't much of them.

Of course, some totally new skill experience and Stats Category fruits were gained!

[Fruit of Alcohol Tolerance]: Increase one's drinking capacity.

Zhang Ye received a thousand of these and ate them all!

[Flight Engine Manufacturing Skill Experience Book]

This skill experience book made Zhang Ye's balls ache, and he had actually gotten quite a lot of them too. Engine manufacturing? Why didn't you just give me an Excavator Repair Skill Experience

Book instead!

Whatever, I'll just eat it!

Who knows if it might be useful later!

At the end of the lottery draw, Zhang Ye even dropped by the Merchant Shop and bought several hundred Taiji Fist Skill Experience Books at once. He could straight up buy this item as he had its purchasing rights. He had no need to use the lottery draw and could buy it whenever he wanted, except that it was a little bit costly. This book required a million Reputation Points each, and several hundred of them would mean he had to spend several hundred million Reputation Points all at once. His Taiji Fist abilities had gained a slight improvement again, but as for whether he could step up to the level of grandmaster was still to be seen.

Alright!

Enough spending of Reputation Points, that's all for today!

Zhang Ye did a simple inventory check of his Stats and Skills Category items and felt quite satisfied with it as he raised almost every aspect of them again. He could do everything with even more confidence now!

There was also quite a lot of items left in his inventory.

[Difficulty Adjustment Die] x 1.

[X-ray Vision Eye Drops] x 1.

[Pause Game] x 1.

[1-Up] x 1.

[Spring Water of Health] x 4.

Chapter 1213: Semi-grandmaster!

Noon.

Jiaomen East.

At Old Rao's house.

The door was open. It seemed like Rao Aimin had just finished making lunch as the entire house was filled with the aroma of cooking. Chenchen and Yang Shu were both waiting at the dinner table when Zhang Ye showed up uninvited.

"Yo, Big Sis Rao, are you making lunch?" Zhang Ye eyes lit up.

Rao Aimin looked at him. "Have you eaten yet?"

Zhang Ye took a step into the house. "Not yet, what good timing!"

Rao Aimin's next words were: "Chenchen, shut the door!"

Chenchen actually listened to her and was really going to close the door.

Zhang Ye squeezed in through the doorway. "Hey, hey, hey, what's the meaning of this?"

His junior martial sister was still the one who cared the most about him. Yang Shu gave up her seat and brought over another stool for herself. She said respectfully, "Senior Bro, please take a seat here."

Zhang Ye gave her an approving nod. "OK!"

Yang Shu went to fetch a pair of chopsticks for him.

Zhang Ye spoke like a lord, "Get me a bowl of rice too. Make the serving larger, I'm starving."

"Alright." Yang Shu busily attended to his requests.

Chenchen could not look on and said in her childish voice, "Old Yang, don't spoil him."

Rao Aimin was shaking her head nonstop.

Only Zhang Ye and Yang Shu remained from the Taiji branch of martial arts in this world. Their predecessors were no longer around, and no successors lay ahead. In the whole wide world, only the two of them remained. Zhang Ye was Yang Shu's senior martial brother. As the senior martial brother, he was like a father figure to her. Moreover, Zhang Ye was like a semi-master to Yang Shu. The line of the Taiji branch of martial arts was broken and not something Rao Aimin could take over to teach. Other than Zhang Ye, no one could teach her. Zhang Ye was also the closest person to her in this world, which was why Yang Shu had always been very respectful to him as her senior martial brother. She would do whatever he asked, be it physical work or running errands.

At the dinner table.

Zhang Ye asked, "Yang'er, how's your kung fu practice going?"

Yang Shu put down her chopsticks and answered in earnest, "I did not disappoint you, Senior Bro. I've made some good improvement."

"Good." Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I'll teach you another couple of moves later."

Yang Shu became very excited. "Thank you, Senior Bro!"

Chenchen curled her lips. "Hur hur."

Zhang Ye pretended not to hear. He looked at Old Rao and said cockily, "Shall we exchange a few blows after lunch? You can take the chance to exercise a little and I can teach my junior sis a few new moves at the same time."

Rao Aimin dismissed, "With that skill of yours?"

Zhang Ye bragged, "I've made huge leaps recently. I'm no longer the old me."

Rao Aimin said in amusement, "Sure then, I'll give it a try."

Chenchen said, "My aunt hasn't fully recovered from her injuries yet."

Rao Aimin cut her off and said, "It's fine. I can win against him even with my injuries. How dare he challenge me!"

After lunch.

Zhang Ye sneakily went to pour a glass of water. With no one watching, he furtively opened up his game ring and retrieved a bottle of Spring Water of Health from the inventory. Then, he silently poured it into the glass. He wasn't sure if this thing would actually work on other people, but he could at least try. He wanted to see if it would heal Old Rao's injuries and at the same time test if his kung fu was good enough to match a grandmaster after he had "eaten" another several hundred Taiji Fist Skill Experience Books.

Yang Shu went to wash the dishes.

Zhang Ye walked over affably. "Old Rao, have some water."

Rao Aimin was taken aback, then said to Chenchen, "Go look out the window."

Chenchen asked, "Look at what?"

Rao Aimin said, "See if the sun rose from the west today. This kid actually poured water for me? Are you trying to poison me?"

Zhang Ye nearly vomited blood.

In the end, Rao Aimin still drank it.

Zhang Ye watched her. "How are you feeling?"

"A little warm." Rao Aimin then stared at him. "Hey, rascal, did you really try to poison me?"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "Why would I poison you? You probably ate too much and the food is burning off."

A space was cleared out within the apartment.

Chenchen hid away at the top of the stairs, lying on the staircase observing the fight downstairs.

Meanwhile, Yang Shu stood in a corner, watching without blinking.

Rao Aimin said uncaringly, "Let's begin."

"You first." Zhang Ye got into a stance.

Rao Aimin asked, "Should I hold back?"

Zhang Ye said, "Doesn't matter."

"Alright."

The most exciting moment was about to arrive.

Chenchen even placed a bet with Yang Shu. "Old Yang, who are you betting on to win?"

Yang Shu said firmly, "My Senior Bro!"

"It's definitely going to be my aunt," Chenchen said.

This time, it wasn't going to be a touch and go exchange of blows. It wasn't going to be fought using fanciful chopstick moves either. This was going to be the first official all-out duel between Rao Aimin and Zhang Ye. It might be a duel held in a living room measuring little more than ten square meters, and there might only be two people watching, but if anyone from the Chinese martial arts world learned about this, it would surely spark a big reaction from them. A lot of people would definitely wish they were here to see this, to see whose technique was the stronger one!

Zhang Ye vs. Rao Aimin!

Taiji Fist vs. Eight Trigrams Palm!

The hooligan of the Chinese martial arts world versus the evil tyrant of the Chinese martial arts world!

A man just below the level of grandmaster versus a Chinese martial arts grandmaster!

A duel that could probably be written in the annals of Chinese martial arts history was happening right here in this humble little apartment without any fanfare!

Bang!

They immediately went all out with their first exchange!

Rao Aimin slipped into the Eight Trigrams Step and aimed a palm strike at Zhang Ye's side!

Zhang Ye fended it off by dampening her blow and countered with a punch!

Rao Aimin raised her hand to block it!

There was concealed power imbued within Zhang Ye's palm!

Rao Aimin met it with a palm strike of her own!

The two of them hobbled back two steps, with no one getting any advantage over the other.

Rao Aimin smiled and said, "Yo, you've recovered from your injuries?"

Zhang Ye smiled. "I guess I have."

"You've got good moves. Come on then." Rao Aimin used her swimming body stance and stuck close to him.

Chenchen shouted from above, "Auntie, go on, hit him! Hit him!"

Meanwhile, Yang Shu silently watched with wide eyes. She was memorizing every move Zhang Ye executed. She knew that her senior martial brother was already starting to teach her!

There was another exchange of blows!

Bang!

Smash!

Both sides were going back and forth!

A closer look would reveal that Zhang Ye's advantage lay in his

strength, reaction, and stamina. Together with his young age, he had all the advantages a man should have. But for Rao Aimin, her advantage was in her technique, experience, and control of rhythm. The most critical thing was that her concealed power was clearly much more ingrained than Zhang Ye's. So as the duel went on, Zhang Ye's strength was slowly getting sapped while Rao Aimin gradually gained the upper hand!

A duel involving Chinese martial arts was a very quick engagement of moves. Rarely would you see those huge battles involving hundreds of blows like in the movies or on television. Even if the martial artists didn't starve to death, they would probably die trying to hold their bladders! A quick duel would be over in just one or two exchanges. If it took longer than that, probably several dozen exchanges would leave either one of the opponents lying on the ground.

When Zhang Ye realized that things weren't looking good, he quickly pulled back. "Alright, alright, that's enough for now." Then he saw that his fists and several parts of his arms had turned red!

Hai.

He was still a step away from becoming a grandmaster.

No, it was a step away previously, but he was now only half a step away.

Zhang Ye knew he was still not good enough to beat Old Rao, and he wasn't just lacking by a bit. Although he still had many special techniques that he did not show, Old Rao probably hadn't pulled out any of her special moves either.

But Rao Aimin hadn't had enough. "Come, again!"

Zhang Ye snorted. "I'm tired, another day perhaps."

Rao Aimin pursed her lips. "You're no fun." She relaxed as well.

Then Zhang Ye looked at her. "How are you feeling?"

"What do you mean by how am I feeling?" Rao Aimin did not quite understand him but was gradually taken aback. She looked at her palm, then raised it and struck at the air with concealed power. There wasn't a sound or any movement, but the spectating Yang Shu knew that if anyone had taken her palm strike, even if it just brushed past them a little, they would probably have ended up with shattered bones!

Yang Shu said dumbfounded, "Master Rao, your injuries..."

Rao Aimin was also very happy. "Hey, did I make a full recovery from my injuries? How can it be so quick?"

Compared to the injuries suffered by Zhang Ye, Rao Aimin had nearly died at the martial arts conference. She took quite a few attacks of concealed power and suffered both internal and external injuries. If she wanted to recover to her previous skill level, Zhang Ye estimated it would take at least a year or so. On top of that, Rao Aimin would likely suffer a drop in her skill level in the two to three years that followed or even after her full recovery. She wouldn't be able to reach her peak level again. After all, she was a woman and her age was catching up as well. But surprisingly, after today's exchange with Zhang Ye, Rao Aimin felt that she had recovered from all her internal injuries and returned to the peak of her prowess.

Only Zhang Ye knew what was really going on!

It was the effect of the Spring Water of Health!

Besides him, this item could aid others to recover from injuries and sickness? Moreover, its effects were almost immediate and could even heal such heavy internal injuries. This must be some type of a miracle cure!

Zhang Ye laughed loudly, "You should thank me."

Rao Aimin sneered. "What has it got anything to do with you?"

Yang Shu added, "Congratulations, Master Rao!"

Chenchen ran down the stairs. "Aunt, this is great."

"Alright, I'm feeling happy today. I'll whip up a good meal for all of you tonight," Rao Aimin said evenly.

Old Rao's injuries were now healed. Zhang Ye's skill level had increased. With them both standing guard now, even if those experts from the "respectable" martial sects who were seriously injured by them made a full recovery and came seeking revenge, they would have nothing to worry about. Besides, there was also one more person who was close to achieving concealed power on their side, Yang Shu!

Chapter 1214: The pie that is the Chinese language textbook curriculum revision!

In the afternoon.

Ha Qiqi went downstairs to look for Zhang Ye.

Zhang Ye was sparring with Yang Shu at Rao Aimin's apartment.

"Director Zhang, are you busy?"

"Not at all, I'm done here."

"Everyone has arrived and are waiting for you in the conference room."

"Alright, I'll be right over."

"I just received some news about something that cropped up over at Central TV."

"Did something happen? Come, let's talk about it back at the office."

His studio was located just upstairs. He didn't even need to take the elevator and only took a minute or two by stairs to get to. The conference room was packed with all the studio employees present.

Zhang Ye sat down. "Let's get the meeting started."

Everyone began reporting about the progress of their work over the past few days.

The sales volume of Fortress Besieged, the reputation gained from winning the highest honor, and a summary of the increase in popularity during this period, etc. Work was going well and the results were very delightful too. All of them had handed in an impeccable answer sheet, and the main contributor definitely had to be Zhang Ye. As expected, when the studio staff were all feeling hopeless about things, Zhang Ye managed to pull it off. He saved

the entire "world" with a novel he had written and put back on track the plan they had for him to reach the summit. They were within sight of those seven spots at the top. What laid ahead of them now was only the latter half of the plan.

Zhang Zuo said, "We've already started preparing for the third milestone."

Ha Qiqi gave a wry smile and said, "Although we say that we're preparing for it, there isn't much that we can actually do."

Wu Yi said, "Yeah, whether we can hit the third milestone target or not, we can only leave it in fate's hands. There isn't much hope, but there's still a minute chance, I suppose."

Zhang Zuo analyzed, "The biggest issue is that Director Zhang's relationship with many of those in the education field is just average. The people from Peking University and Media College are definitely going to be supportive of Director Zhang, even though we can ignore and discount the effect that Media College has on this matter. This isn't something that they have much influence in, but Peking University still has a very large say. Then the remaining people could only be considered opponents of this milestone target that we have. Anyone who came out of Tsinghua University definitely won't put in a recommendation for Director Zhang's works. Many of the Redologists in the education field are still scolding Director Zhang every day. Then, there are also some others....Hai, there are just too many of them."

Everyone's heads hurt.

Zhang Ye asked, "It's going to happen soon?"

Zhang Zuo said somberly, "Yes, they'll be making a decision very soon."

Zhang Ye asked again, "Which day exactly?"

"I tried to find out but couldn't get any information," Zhang Zuo said.

Zhang Ye acknowledged, "Alright, I'll go check with my friends then."

Ha Qiqi said, "When we set this as our third milestone, we did have some hesitations as well. Honestly, even if we can't achieve it, it's fine. It's too difficult to achieve in the first place."

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Let's just give it a try."

Little Wang said loudly, "Yes, that's right. We definitely have to give it a try and see how it turns out. This is a great chance to go down in history, and it's also a huge sustainable source of popularity!"

All of them were discussing the new curriculum changes to the national textbooks and teaching materials!

That was the third milestone in the plan to reach the summit!

The nine-year compulsory curriculum revision of the textbooks and teaching materials was going to be implemented soon. The new content for the textbooks used in elementary, middle, and high schools involved changes in many aspects and also coincided with the educational reforms introduced over the past two years. The importance of such an exercise, its importance, and its politicality were all interconnected. The relationship between them was intricate and complex. In fact, rumors of revisions to the textbooks had been floating around since last year. Curriculum revisions were cyclical in nature, and they had reached the key point in time again. The curriculum revision was no secret, and everyone was prepared for it. However, no one expected it to be dragged out for so long until today, when some insider news finally got leaked.

The public still did not know, but many of the industry insiders had heard the news.

Zhang Ye's Studio was naturally concerned about it as they were hoping for a chance to get written into the textbooks!

It could even be said that the first and second milestones were completed in order to increase their chances of reaching the third milestone. By releasing a best-selling novel and winning a prestigious award, it wouldn't matter if others did not acknowledge Zhang Ye. With such achievements, Zhang Ye would become one of the leading figures in the literary field. The studio staff were all hoping that Zhang Ye would be able to get onto a page of the newly revised Chinese Language textbooks during this time his glowing achievements stood out. Even if it was going to be on the most corner spot of a page, even if only one of his works were chosen, that was enough for them!

Was this an important matter?

Yes, it really was a very important matter!

Thinking back to Beijing Television's Wang Shuixin whom Zhang Ye had fought with over the death of Father Wei, he had a poem called "Everything" that was listed in the appendix of a Chinese Language textbook. It wasn't even the main article, but Wang Shuixin behaved like he was some big shot. Those who could get their works into the official textbooks were either going to be the great ancients or a contemporary literary master!

The benefits were enormous!

A storm was probably brewing within the literary field!

But this only affected the Chinese language textbooks. Mathematics? Whoever could write a question that made it into the math textbook, that would just be it. There wouldn't be any attention given to the identity of the question writer, nor did anyone care. At most, the teacher who wrote that question could brag about it and tell their family and friends that it was they who wrote it.

Physics?

Chemistry?

English?

History?

Geography?

It was the same for those subjects. The Chinese language textbooks were the only difference. Any essays or poems that appeared in the Chinese language textbooks would be credited to the original authors. The students would even be required to recite some of them by heart! And what did that mean? Simply put, as long as a child was born and attended school in China, they would come across your work or have had to memorize it when they were young. They would definitely know your name, and this wasn't even by choice. There was simply no way of avoiding it, and they would have to know about it even if they did not wish to. You would then become known as a very great person to them from the time they were young!

If the highest honors in literature were an ICBM missile, then having your work chosen to be published in the Chinese language textbooks would make it an atomic bomb. The "radiation" effects would last for a very long time, or even affect someone for the rest of their lives!

As a literary figure, how important was this?

As someone from the entertainment industry, how important was this?

However, the other people from the entertainment industry had no chance of fighting for this opportunity. The only exception was Zhang Ye, as only he had the qualifications to fight it out with those big names in the literary field, to fight for that slim chance of having his work picked for the Chinese language textbook!

Textbooks for all six grades of elementary school?

Textbooks for all six grades of middle and high school?

Yes, perhaps there was even get a chance of getting one's works

featured in the textbooks of both the first and second semesters of school!

It might sound like it was a lot or that there were many chances of getting one's work featured in the textbooks, but in reality, this was not so. The curriculum revision did not seek to change everything and would keep the majority of past teaching materials intact. For many of the ancients, their already included works would definitely not be touched. So the revision rate was not large at all. Excluding the predecessors' works that made it in, and excluding those sections where poems and essays were irrelevant, whatever was left of the pie was tiny!

Ten bites?

Eight bites?

That was probably all there was!

And those in the literary field who were fighting to get a bite?
There were tens of thousands!

Chapter 1215: A great opportunity!

The direction of the third milestone in the "Reach the Summit" plan was set.

Everyone's plan was just to wait? To ask around for information? To depend on luck?

But that was not what Zhang Ye was thinking. He had his own ideas and knew that he had to contend for an opportunity like this. Getting included in the Chinese language textbooks was a great opportunity. Only an idiot would not want this! Of course, Zhang Ye wasn't doing this for himself, he really wasn't. He was doing this for the great scholars from his previous world. If the essence of those scholars' wisdom from his previous world could not even make it into the Chinese language textbooks over here, then damn, what would that mean?

Wouldn't it be too goddamn insulting!

Wasn't it as good as getting pushed around!

Could he tolerate that? Of course he couldn't!

Even if he could tolerate it, would Old Li (Li Bai) tolerate that? Would Old Du (Du Fu) tolerate that?

And so, Zhang Ye hoped that he could seize a spot in the textbooks however small it was!

After the meeting, Zhang Ye went to call his Peking University colleague, Su Na. Teacher Su was from the university's Chinese Department and had maintained a good relationship with him. Her father was also someone in the literary field.

"Teacher Su."

"Yo, Teacher Zhang."

"What have you been up to recently?"

"Teaching, what else?"

"By the way, can I ask you something? The textbook curriculum revision will be implemented soon, have you heard about it?"

"Yes, I've heard. The literary field is stirring up because of it, so who wouldn't know? Why are you asking? Do you intend to contend for it too? That's right, Teacher Zhang, you're qualified to get selected!"

"Aiyah, please don't say that. How am I qualified? I'm still lacking by too much. I was just asking. Anyway, what are the requirements to get selected for the textbook curriculum revision?"

"Didn't you say that you were still lacking by too much?"

"Yeah, but a person cannot have no goals. Otherwise, what difference would that be from being a salted fish?"

"Pfft, you can say whatever you like. In any case, I don't know much. I've heard some things from my parents, but I'm not exactly sure what the selection criteria is. That's something that the Education Department Textbook Revision work groups are handling. All I know is that they should probably be finishing the revision soon and should've prepared everything that needs to be prepared. I think it should be happening tomorrow morning. They'll be holding a meeting to discuss the specifics to tie up the changes. As for when they'll announce the changes and start the actual printing of the new textbooks, I'm not sure. For the mathematics and physics revisions, they might delay it until a later time because there's a bigger debate over them. They probably wouldn't be able to get it settled in the short term—that's what I heard from the Math Department. So yeah, that's about it."

"Tomorrow morning?"

"I think so."

"Don't just think so, are you sure?"

"I'm sure!"

"Alright, I got it. Thanks, you sure are well-informed."

"That's because you don't even come by Peking University anymore. If you came here to teach every day, what news in the education field would you not know?"

The call ended.

Zhang Ye went to find Ha Qiqi and Zhang Zuo. "I've found out that the curriculum revision for the Chinese language textbooks will be tied up by tomorrow morning."

Zhang Zuo said in anticipation, "I hope for good news then!"

Zhang Ye suddenly remembered something and looked at Ha Qiqi. "By the way, Sister Ha. You told me earlier at Old Rao's house that something happened at Central TV? What was it about?"

Ha Qiqi hesitated for a while before saying, "It's insider news. I learned of it from a former coworker at Central TV. It hasn't been announced yet, but it's been confirmed."

Zhang Ye asked, "So what's the matter?"

Ha Qiqi said, "Central TV Department 1 will be filming a second season of The Voice!"

Little Wang's ears were sharp and caught what they were saying. "What? How'd they get the copyright! Back when they signed the contract, the copyrights were all given to Director Zhang!"

Ha Qiqi shook her head. "It was just a figure of speech. In fact, they're going to film a new show and have already started prepping for it. The name of the show will be Sing! China, but to put it plainly, they just changed the name from The Voice to Sing!. In reality, it's just the second season of The Voice. The Voice was incredibly popular with the audience last year, and since Central TV Department 1 does not have any good reality shows lined up for this year, they're resorting to using The Voice again to carry the banner. They'll probably be putting together a new program team and invite a new panel of guest coaches, although I heard that there won't be many changes to the stage. The show's format will

also remain the same."

Little Wang exclaimed, "That's considered infringement too!"

Wu Yi said angrily, "They're only changing how the show looks! Sue them!"

But Zhang Zuo said, "If they just change the segment where the guest coaches turn around in their chairs and make them stand up to turn around instead, or use some similar methods to block their views, it would really be very difficult to sue them. They can just claim that it's a new show with a new design. What can we do about that? We couldn't win even if we went to court."

A year had already passed since The Voice was broadcast. Counting the days, Central TV Department 1 could no longer continue sitting on it. Earlier, a lot of netizens were discussing whether there would be a second season of The Voice after Zhang Ye ended his contract with Central TV. Who would do it? And how were they going to do it? It seemed like there was an answer now. Central TV Department 1 would still carry on filming it. They would just ditch Zhang Ye, Ha Qiqi, Zhang Zuo, and the rest of the old program team, then take the show and film it by themselves!

How devious!

But this was expected!

Zhang Ye was not at all surprised. "Let's put this issue aside for now."

What else could he do? Such things had happened even in Zhang Ye's previous world. Although they were no longer authorized to make the show due to not having the copyrights, there had always been striking similarities in history and was difficult to enforce.

Forget it, just ignore them for now. The plan to reach the summit was still the most crucial of all.

...

Later that afternoon.

The news started to spread!

The curriculum revision for the elementary, middle, and high school textbooks was finally revealed. In fact, it was the Ministry of Education that held a press conference to announce this important news. For a lot of those in the industry, this wasn't really news. But to the majority of the public, this was the first time they were hearing about it.

A lot of information was made available through this press conference.

Like how there would be an increase in difficulty for the high school math textbooks.

And how the patriotic education in the elementary school textbooks would be enhanced.

Or the increase in vocabulary words used in the English language textbooks.

But of course, it was still the revision of the Chinese language textbooks that attracted the most attention. Every time there was a curriculum revision, the elementary and middle school Chinese language textbooks would get the most attention!

"Math is already so difficult, but they still want to make it harder?"

"No, please, no! Math is the only subject I'm bad at!"

"Hai, they shouldn't put so much stress on children."

"The Chinese language textbooks will be getting a major revision as well?"

"Whose essays do you guys think will get into the textbooks?"

"Hard to say."

"Right, any master in the literary field stands a chance of getting

in. Isn't the prose by Master Liu super famous? There's been a heated discussion for the last two days, so it should probably get selected, right?"

"Who knows?"

"The winners of the last two Yanhong Literary Prizes should stand a chance, right?"

"Eh, does that mean that Zhang Ye has a chance as well?"

"Yeah, he probably has a chance as well!"

"Ahhh, I like Zhang Ye's 'The Answer.' 'Debasement is the password of the base.' I really love this poem, but maybe it'll be too dark for the younger people? It probably won't get chosen."

"'Ode to Young China' has a higher likelihood of getting selected!"

"Right, 'Ode to Young China'! How did I forget that!"

"That's right, I just remembered it too. It was even featured on People's Daily!"

"Zhang Ye's essays and poems are usually too aggressive in nature. If he really stands a chance of contending for one of the spots in the Chinese language textbook revision, 'Ode to Young China' is probably the most hopeful one!"

"Teacher Zhang, we'll be cheering you on!"

"Damn, if Face-smacking Zhang really gets selected for the textbooks, he'll be so awesome! Won't that fellow be soaring to the skies then?"

"He's already an author, poet, host, singer, mathematician, calligrapher, crosstalk comedian, skit actor, variety show director, documentary director, Go master, and so on and so forth, so would he still need to soar to the skies? That fellow is already fucking standing shoulder to shoulder with the sun!"

"Pfft!"

"Hahahahaha!"

"This is such a great opportunity, so let's see if Teacher Zhang can grab hold of it!"

Chapter 1216: All of the Tsinghua University representatives meet with trouble!

Friday.

In the morning.

The alarm sounded and Zhang Ye climbed up from bed rubbing his eyes. He headed to the bathroom to wash up while calling out to the living room, "Mom, what's for breakfast? I'm not going to work this morning."

His mother asked, "Did you take time off to rest?"

Zhang Ye squeezed some toothpaste onto his toothbrush. "Yeah."

"There are only leftovers from yesterday, so make do with that," his mother said.

Zhang Ye said absent-mindedly, "Sure, anything's fine."

After breakfast, Zhang Ye kept checking his watch.

His father wondered, "What are you doing?"

Zhang Ye smiled. "It's nothing, I'm just whiling away the time."

His mother suddenly thought of something. "Did you see the news? They're reporting about the national curriculum revision for the elementary, middle, and high school textbooks. Do you have any chance with the Chinese language textbooks? Can any of your works get published?"

Zhang Ye spread up his hands. "How would I know?"

His father was also very concerned. He said, "Go ask around."

"I can't." Zhang Ye shook his head. "I could ask around about the voting process for the most coveted domestic literary awards, but for something like the curriculum revision process, I can't find out anything about it. That information is privy only to those in the Ministry of Education and a select few in the education

community. It's no place for me to speak."

His father sighed, "I don't suppose there's much of a chance anyway."

His parents also knew that the curriculum revision was a huge event. Even if it were the most reputable and respected person in the literary circle, their names would not be easily made known to the public. The importance and sensitivity of such matters clearly went far beyond the selection process of the Yanhong Literary Prize or the Qilu Literature Prize. Any person, name, or essay that was shortlisted would cause a great discussion and have far-reaching effects in the education field, or even within society itself.

It was almost 7:40 AM.

Seeing this, Zhang Ye went back to his room and closed the door behind him.

His staff at the studio were all waiting for this slice of pie to drop from the sky, but only Zhang Ye was prepared to fight for it. Networking? That was not his style! This fellow had always preferred to be self-reliant!

There were two choices.

The Lucky Halo?

Or the Difficulty Adjustment Die?

After thinking about it, he felt that the latter was too precious an item. He only had one die left in his inventory. Moreover, the die was mighty powerful. Whether it be lowering or raising the difficulty level, it was overpowered. The effective duration of the item was also not fixed, so using it would be as good as wielding an atomic bomb. It couldn't be used unnecessarily. So the remaining option was clear and simple. Although the Lucky Halo (Upgraded) could not be compared to the Difficulty Adjustment Die in terms of its might, it was far more stable and dependable. It should be more than enough to handle this sort of situation. But of course,

whether this plan would work was not guaranteed. He could only do his best and give it a try.

He activated the Lucky Halo (Upgraded)!

The Reputation Points were getting consumed without stop!

-100,000!

-100,000!

A halo appeared over his head.

The bright pulsating glow rippled outward wave after wave.

...

Meanwhile.

The experts were busy chattering and analyzing things.

The netizens were also voicing their opinions.

The media outlets also set aside their headlines while waiting for the outcome of the curriculum revision.

Throughout society, everyone placed great hopes and expectations on this textbook curriculum revision. From a survey, everyone was happy to see the positive education reforms and changes that were going to be introduced. But as for the degree and depth of change the revisions would bring, no one other than those in the review commission set up by the Ministry of Education knew.

At an office somewhere in the Ministry of Education.

On the third level.

Inside the conference room of the Chinese language textbook revision work group.

"Old Qi, you're here?"

"Dr. Chen, good morning."

"So it's going to be decided today, huh?"

"It's already been dragged on for so long, so of course it has to be decided soon."

"In the past few meetings, they've nearly come to blows every single time, so how can we come to a decision?"

"Hai, hasn't it always been this way? Every time there's a textbook revision, it's always our Chinese language team that is the most 'lively.' We're always locked in a fierce struggle over the decisions. Didn't you also take part in the previous curriculum revision eight years ago? Let's see if the group leader will make the decision this time. If there's still no outcome, we'll have to turn to voting to decide it."

"Yeah, just look at the math group and the physics group. There's no resistance at all and their meetings are always carried out so harmoniously. Then look at our group over here. The only thing we're short of now is someone flipping the table."

"Scholars tend to scorn each other, and there are a lot of involved relationships."

"The main issue is the disagreements between the Peking University representatives and the Tsinghua University representatives."

"The Fudan University representatives are also not helping by muddying things further."

The meeting had not started yet, but people were gradually arriving.

The Chinese language textbook revision work group was mostly made up of doctorates and professors in the circle of Chinese Departments within the various well-known universities, as well as relevant educators in the industry. There were also representatives from the Ministry of Education, with the work group headed by a director from there. He was a very good person and a meticulous worker.

Several people from Peking University arrived.

Soon after, the Ministry of Education's Director Liu walked into the conference room with a big smile. He was the overseer of the Chinese language textbook revision work group. Although he was wearing a smile on his face, Liu Quancheng was actually feeling very down. It had been days and the mathematics and physics work groups had more or less wrapped up their revisions. Meanwhile, their work group was still arguing nonstop over several spots on the prominent pages of the textbooks. To be fair, the Chinese language work group had already finalized 80% of the content for the textbook revision, but the remaining 20% could not be finalized yet as everyone had their own ideas.

What a difficult task it was to lead this work group!

Whoever wishes to take this role in the future can come and take it, I've had enough!

Although he had such thoughts, Liu Quancheng could explicitly say such things. Many of the work group's members were distinguished people in the education field, and some of them were even teachers to Liu Quancheng's bosses at the ministry, or even his boss's bosses! All in all, the total age of the people in the room came up to over 2,000 years old, so of course he had to be courteous and polite to them. You wouldn't know which of them had direct access to the highest authorities, would you? The waters of the education field were too deep! As such, Liu Quancheng's opinion was very simple. He wouldn't offend anyone and just let them fight among themselves. He wasn't going to care at all.

An old academic representing Peking University looked at him. "Little Liu, are we going to have a vote today?"

Liu Quancheng nodded. "Old Master Chu, I think we should have the vote just to be sure. There are only that dozen or so spots left to decide on, so we have to get it done by today no matter what."

Old Master Chu used to be a dean of the Chinese Department at

Peking University. He even became the vice president of the university later on, but that was more than 40 years ago. After his retirement, Old Master Chu was still involved in a lot of the decision-making processes regarding educational reforms and policies. So just by addressing the work group leader as Little Liu, that was enough for a director like Liu Quancheng to listen to him obediently.

Old Master Chu smacked his lips. "Why do we still have to vote? Since this is a reform, we have to be heavy-handed with the decisions. The world belongs to the young now; we have to show more acceptance and care for the younger generation of academics. We should allow their essays to be published and made known to everyone through the textbooks and not keep guarding those people who already have one foot in the coffin. Is there any meaning in doing so? Then what's the point of having a reform? By the way, I think Zhang Ye is pretty good, don't you?

An old man from Renmin University said, "I disagree. That Zhang Ye kid is too impulsive. 'Ode to Young China' must not make it into the textbooks, not even an excerpt."

"And who are you to say no?"

"It's not only me, many of the others disagree as well."

"Who are the ones who disagree?"

"Just wait for Old Hu and the others to get here!"

There!

Even before the meeting had commenced, they were arguing again!

Liu Quancheng could only sigh in his mind.

Old Hu and the others—that referred to the representatives from Tsinghua University. The reason why the curriculum revision had not wrapped up yet in the last few meetings was due to the representatives of Peking and Tsinghua University arguing every

time they were about to decide on something. Especially when they touched on that fiercely contested spot in the seventh grade (middle school) textbook where an essay was to be featured, the arguments became even more intense. Three essays were shortlisted for it: Ji Hong's "Yangtze River," Li Yucheng's "Above the Storm," and Zhang Ye's "Ode to Young China"!

These three authors were respectively related to Tsinghua, Renmin, and Peking University. So the old comrades who represented these schools were all fervently arguing over which should be chosen. Later, the representatives from Fudan University joined the mix and started voicing their support for Peking University by agreeing that Zhang Ye's essay should be chosen. Seeing that, the representatives from Renmin University changed their tune and expressed their support for Tsinghua University's Ji Hong's "Yangtze River." The mess that followed was simply too chaotic!

Both sides stood by their views and were almost equal in numbers as well. As such, this was where it was most disputed since there was a possibility of either "Yangtze River" or "Ode to Young China" getting chosen.

Liu Quancheng mediated, "Teachers, when everyone has arrived, we'll decide by voting. We'll start off with the first grade elementary school textbook and vote on the disputed works one by one."

It was 7:55 AM.

In another five minutes, they would officially kick off the meeting. For now, they waited.

The few representatives from Renmin University looked at their watches and waited for the representatives from Tsinghua University to arrive. The reason why the representatives from Renmin University were supporting the Tsinghua University representatives was not that they had a good relationship with

them. What happened back on the show Lecture Room, as well as Zhang Ye's lecture on Dream of the Red Chamber, had simply offended too many people at Renmin University. So when it was proposed that Zhang Ye's essay be used in the seventh grade textbook, and when the Fudan University representatives started supporting the Peking University's representatives call to include his essay, they knew that they couldn't allow it to happen. As such, they turned to supporting Tsinghua University's represented essay.

Why weren't they here yet?

Look at the time.

Two minutes had passed, but there were no signs of the Tsinghua University representatives!

Everyone started looking at one another.

At this moment, a phone rang.

"Hello, Old Hu, where are you?"

"I'm still at home."

"The meeting will be starting soon!"

"I suddenly got the runs, so I won't be able to make it in time."

"Ah?"

"Aiyo, I gotta hang up, I have to get back to the toilet."

Du du. The call ended.

Following that, another call came in for Liu Quancheng.

"Hello, Elder Chang?"

"Little Liu, has the meeting started yet?"

"Not yet, where are you?"

"Old Qing and I got stuck in traffic not long after we set out. We're on a viaduct and there's an accident ahead of us. We can't

move at all, none of the cars can!"

Then came yet another call.

"Professor Xu, haven't you gotten off your plane? Didn't you catch the 5 AM flight from Shanghai?"

"I was just calling to notify you. There was a passenger causing trouble on the flight and the plane was late, so we were forced to land at Jinan Airport 1 . We won't be able to resume flying anytime soon!"

"Eh? Forced to land at Jinan Airport?"

No one had thought much of it when it was just the first call.

But after five or six calls, everyone felt like they had seen a ghost!

A stomachache?

Traffic?

The flight was forced to land?

The train was stopped due to a landslide?

All of the old comrades from Tsinghua University were not going to make it for the meeting?

Dammit! How can it be so coincidental?

Do you people from Tsinghua University have to be so down on your luck?!

Everyone has met with some kind of trouble?

Liu Quancheng was stunned for a very long time. "This..."

The representatives from Renmin University nearly vomited blood!

An old professor from Peking University said, "It's time, isn't it?"

Liu Quancheng didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He said, "Then let's get the meeting started so that we can vote."

Chapter 1217: Zhang Ye's works get selected for the national Chinese language textbooks!

At 9 in the morning.

Back at home.

Zhang Ye deactivated the Lucky Halo. When he saw the consumed Reputation Points, he felt pinched and squeezed. He did not know about the progress of the meeting, nor how the discussion went. All he did was activate the Lucky Halo (Upgraded) at close to 8 AM and keep it on for close to an hour. The Reputation Point consumption rate of the Lucky Halo was extremely heavy, with 100,000 Reputation Points needed for every second it was activated. Even with the large amount of Reputation Points Zhang Ye had accumulated by now, it was difficult to bear. He was lucky that he had only used up a portion of his total Reputation Points during the lottery draw the other day and still had some left for today's purpose.

Just how did it go?

Only God would know!

Whatever! However it turns out, so be it!

Zhang Ye opened the door and came out of his room.

"What were you doing in your room?" his mother asked.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Handling some important business."

His father asked, "How did it go?"

Zhang Ye shrugged and said, "I suppose we'll find out tonight."

His mother rolled her eyes at him. "What are you being so secretive about? The most important issue at hand is the curriculum revision! That's right, isn't your girlfriend from the

education sector? She was the vice president of Peking University and has even worked at the provincial education department. Why don't you check with her? You have to take the initiative."

But Zhang Ye said, "Aiya, don't bother her with such things. Mom, I'll help you to make lunch. After eating, I'll have to head to work." Since Zhang Ye had nothing better to do, he decided to help out with whatever chores there were around the house. In reality, it was to divert his attention from the national textbook curriculum revision so that he wouldn't have to keep thinking about it.

In the afternoon.

They were still discussing it on the Internet.

"The changes to the English language curriculum seem to have been set in stone."

"Yeah, I heard that the middle school textbooks will get more difficult."

"The revisions for the math curriculum aren't out yet."

"What about the Chinese language textbooks?"

"I don't know."

"Even though they're calling this a curriculum revision, the majority of the content will still remain the same. There won't really be much change, and this has been talked about before."

"Let's see whose essays will get chosen this time."

"It's gonna be amazing for whoever gets to have their work published."

"It's going to be more than amazing. They'll become famous."

Elsewhere.

Zhang Ye arrived at the studio.

He had just stepped into the office when Elder Qian arrived a

moment later. "Is this Little Zhang's Studio?"

Little Wang opened the door to greet him. "Yes, may I ask who you are?"

Zhang Ye hurried outside when he heard the voice. "Aiyo, Elder Qian, what a rare guest."

Elder Qian chuckled, "I was nearby when I remembered you saying that you had set up your studio not long ago, so I came over to have a look. Am I welcome?"

"Of course you are." Zhang Ye told his studio staff, "This is Elder Qian, a most distinguished person in the literary field. If I'm not around when Elder Qian comes to visit, remember to give him the best reception."

Little Wang said briskly, "Understood!"

Elder Qian said happily, "Kid, don't try that with me."

"Come in, let's talk inside." Zhang Ye and Elder Qian went upstairs.

After glancing around the office, Elder Qian suddenly looked at him. "Is your relationship with Wu Zeqing quite good?"

Old Wu?

Zhang Ye was taken aback for a moment. "Ah, it's not too bad."

Elder Qian gave an "oh" in response.

Zhang Ye wondered, "Why do you ask?"

Elder Qian said, "Your old boss is pretty good to you. I have a friend in the education field I spoke with recently, someone from Fudan University who's also taking part in this education reform. Wu Zeqing contacted him some days ago to ask if he could help you out a little in the Chinese language curriculum revision. When Wu Zeqing was heading a department in the education sector, she had helped that Fudan University friend of mine out quite a bit. So he didn't reject her request. Later on, my friend came to ask me about

what kind of a person you were. I told him not to believe the rumors out there and that you were really quite a nice person. He acknowledged that without saying anything else."

Zhang Ye really did not know about this. He said in surprise, "There was something like that?"

This Old Wu! Why didn't she tell me about this!

Zhang Ye had only found out about the exact time of the curriculum revision meeting yesterday, but who knew that Old Wu was already well aware of it way before he was? And she had even helped him pull some strings?

Elder Qian blinked and said, "You didn't ask Chief Wu to put in a word for you? Then you better thank her properly. She really went through a lot of trouble for you. It seems she values you a lot. Although Wu Zeqing has now gone on to oversee the entertainment industry, her network in the education field is still there. Quite a few Peking University alumni are also in the textbook revision work group. In recent years, you're the only professor from Peking University to have any involvement in the literary field, so they'd definitely support you. Together with Fudan University's support, you probably stand quite a good chance this time, especially with 'Ode to Young China.'"

Zhang Ye chuckled. "Then I'll hold you to your auspicious words?"

Elder Qian said emotionally, "Kid, you're really going to skyrocket soon."

Yes, he wanted to skyrocket in popularity. But before that, Zhang Ye's essay would have to be selected for the revised edition of the textbooks. Until the final moment, no one would know how it would turn out!

Zhang Ye was waiting to find out.

The studio staff were waiting to find out.

The education and literary fields were waiting to find out.

The media reporters were also eagerly looking forward to it.

...

At 7 PM.

The studio staff hadn't left work yet.

Little Wang said anxiously, "Will they announce it today?"

"I don't know." Wu Yi was browsing the news online. "There aren't any updates. The English language and chemistry textbooks' revisions have already been confirmed, but there's still no news about the Chinese language textbooks."

Ha Qiqi said, "Wait a little longer."

"Hey, there it is!"

"What?"

"Where, where?"

"Look at the news, the changes to the Chinese language textbooks have been finalized!"

In a flash, the studio staff all gathered around. Zhang Ye also ran down from upstairs to join them.

"Is Director Zhang's name in there?"

"I'm looking for it!"

"An excerpt of Sun Fang's novel has made it in?"

"Meng Han's poem will be featured in the eighth grade's second semester textbook?"

"Who else is there?"

"I'm still looking, don't rush me!"

"Ah!"

"I saw it!"

"Holy shit! There's Director Zhang's name!"

"An excerpt of 'Ode to Young China' has been selected! It's going to be in the middle school textbook!"

"Oh my God! He really made it in!"

"Director Zhang! It's in! We've made it in!"

"Wait, why is there another one?"

"Holy fuck!"

"'Tribute to the White Poplar'?"

"What's that?"

"When did Director Zhang write an essay titled 'Tribute to the White Poplar'?"

"I know this one! I've read it before! It was written by Director Zhang!"

"Th-This one made it into the elementary school textbook? We didn't only have one essay selected, two of them actually made it into the textbooks?!"

"Tribute to the White Poplar"?

Startled, Zhang Ye suddenly remembered it. This prose titled "Tribute to the White Poplar" was written back at the parent-teacher conference at Chenchen's school. At that time, the teachers wanted the children to write an essay, but Chenchen did not know how to and kept asking Zhang Ye to write one for her. This was also that very well-known essay that made it into the national textbooks back in Zhang Ye's previous world! Zhang Ye had still not made a name for himself when he brought over this essay to this world. On top of that, the circumstances in which it had been brought out made it relatively unknown here since there was hardly any publicity. That was why this essay was not well-known over here. In fact, many people didn't even know that Zhang Ye had written the essay. So Zhang Ye was astounded that "Tribute to

the White Poplar" had made it into the elementary school textbooks. This was indeed an unexpected gain!

He was very happy for himse—

Oh, he was very happy for Mao Dun!

The studio staff started cheering!

"Director Zhang the Mighty!"

"This is so impressive!"

"He's made it into the national textbooks!"

"There won't be any more changes, right?"

"No, the announcement said the selected works are final! It's been decided!"

"I thought it was exceedingly lucky to have one work featured, but there were two in the end? How generous of the education field to give so much face to Director Zhang! It looks like he hasn't offended as many people as we thought he had!"

"That's great!"

"The third milestone in our 'Reach the Summit' plan has been achieved!"

"Yeah, we didn't even think that the third milestone could really be achieved!"

"And it was even achieved beyond our expectations!"

Everyone was shouting and screaming!

Zhang Ye was also quite happy with the outcome, but thought to himself, Do you guys really think that it was the education field's people who gave me face? If it weren't for my Lucky Halo and Old Wu's help, much less "Tribute to the White Poplar," even "Ode to Young China" might not've been selected!

Chapter 1218: Skyrocketing!

Beijing Television.

Central TV News Channel.

Shanghai Satellite Television.

And everyone else. On the same night, every television station was reporting this news!

Which family did not have a child? Which child did not need to go to school? The issue of education had always been of the greatest concern to the public. The national textbook curriculum revision was an even greater issue for them. Any news that was relevant to the public would naturally be given the widest coverage by the media and television stations!

"Physics textbook compilation fraught with difficulties?"

"English language textbook will see increase in number of vocabulary words included!"

"Huge changes to Chinese language textbooks!"

"Both 'Ode to Young China' and 'Tribute to the White Poplar' have been selected?"

Zhang Ye might become greatest beneficiary of Chinese language textbook curriculum revision!"

The Ministry of Education uncharacteristically gives Zhang Ye their approval?"

"Expert analysis: Having works selected to be included in the national textbooks will have a major impact on Zhang Ye's popularity and status!"

There was a heated discussion on Weibo.

"He was really chosen!"

"And it's even two his essays as entries?"

"Has Teacher Zhang been on steroids recently or something?"

"Yeah, selling that many copies of Fortress Besieged and taking the top honors at the most prestigious domestic literary awards. And now, he even has his works selected for the national Chinese language textbooks?"

"In the future, Zhang Ye's best-selling books won't be Ghost Blows Out the Light or Fortress Besieged!"

"Huh? Then what will it be?"

"It's going to be the elementary and middle school textbooks, of course!"

"Pfft!"

"Zhang Ye has boarded a rocket ship and can't be stopped!"

"All the latest headlines have been about him!"

"What is he trying to achieve here? Putting in so much effort? He couldn't have set his sights on one of those seven spots in the S-list, could he?"

"That can't be. Teacher Zhang's still far from reaching the S-list. He shouldn't be able to get there without at least another few years of hard work, right?"

"That's hard to say. Just look, how much has Zhang Ye's popularity grown over the past few days? There might not even be a need to wait a few years to see that happening. Those at the top should really start being wary of him!"

"That's quite unlikely."

"Yeah, you're exaggerating."

"I don't think it will happen anytime soon either. After all, those seven spots are too difficult to reach, and we've never seen a change in the rankings after so many years. But then again, looking at the current entertainment industry, if there's anyone who can replace one of those seven Heavenly Kings and Queens, it

should only be Zhang Ye. Just look at his domestic celebrity ranking. He's been sitting comfortably atop the A-list and has been widening the gap on those who were almost even with him in just what? A month? Two months?"

"Supporting Zhang Ye's climb to the top of the entertainment industry!"

Of course, there were also voices of doubt.

"What's with this?"

"Is he even qualified enough?"

"Is it really a good idea to put the essays of someone with a temper like Zhang Ye's into the national textbooks?"

"What the hell is 'Tribute to the White Poplar'? It's just an essay written in vernacular!"

Among those who questioned the decision of the Ministry of Education, the representative figures of the group actually turned out to be several executives from Central TV Department 1.

Central TV Department 1's Deputy Director Jiang Yuan: "Education is a serious matter, and so are the textbooks used to educate our children. Putting the works of a historically tainted celebrity into the teaching materials is irresponsible to our children!"

There was a wave of scolding below that comment.

"Get lost!"

"It's Central TV Department 1 that has a tainted history!"

"Are you done trying to slander Zhang Ye?"

"Enough is enough! It was you people who didn't handle the matter properly back then that led to Zhang Ye suing you in court. You guys lost the lawsuit, remember?"

...

At home.

When Zhang Ye reached home, he heard his mom talking on the phone with her old colleague in the living room.

"Yes, didn't you watch the news? It's being reported everywhere!"

"Really?"

"Yes, his works were really selected to be in the Chinese language textbooks. One of them is for the elementary school textbook, and the other is for the middle school textbook!"

"Your son is amazing. You and Old Zhang have taught him so well! Everyone is envious of you two."

"Hahaha, when your granddaughter starts school, my son's essays will be in the textbooks. She might even be asked to recite them...."

His mother was bragging to other people again.

Zhang Ye was used to this, and his mother could not be controlled by anyone when it came to bragging.

"Hai, my son is home now, I'm going to hang up!" After his mother put down the phone, she said excitedly, "Son, you were really chosen! You've done us proud!"

His father also said with glee, "This is a good thing! It's an extremely good thing!"

His mother said, "You'll become even more well-known."

"It's not a matter of fame." His father said sternly, "Doing something for the cause of education is what truly matters. Using this to gain popularity is unconventional, so don't be so short-sighted."

Mom winked at her son. "Ignore him."

Zhang Ye laughed.

Congratulatory calls were also starting to come in one after

another.

Zhang Ye's friends were also feeling very shocked by Zhang Ye having two of his essays selected for the national textbooks. All of them expressed their incredulity while offering their congratulations to him.

Hu Fei wondered, "What kind of trick did it take to pull that off?"

Zhang Ye said, "Haha, magic?"

Hu Fei said in amusement, "Since when were you so loved in the industry?"

Zhang Ye sighed. "I suppose everyone did give me some face."

The industry's opinion of Zhang Ye was improving as they felt he had a lot of potential. In the past, Zhang Ye always went around scolding and offending everyone. Not many industries were able to accept him and the industry insiders mostly did not want to acknowledge someone like him. Even though he hadn't changed his temper much, a lot of the mainstream was slowly starting to accept him. In fact, some of them even accepted that extraordinarily foul temper of his!

It was the literary field before this!

Now it was the education field's turn!

Zhang Ye was stepping onto the right path, and his place in the industry was slowly stabilizing.

At night.

His parents were asleep.

The buzz on the Internet started to die down.

Zhang Ye was lying in bed as he took out his phone to call Wu Zeqing. His first call did not go through, but Old Wu returned his call after 15 minutes.

Zhang Ye asked: "What are you doing?"

"I just finished bathing. I had to work overtime today, so I got home a little late," Wu Zeqing said with a giggle.

Zhang Ye blinked and said: "Two of my essays were selected for the national textbooks."

Wu Zeqing laughed: "I know, I saw it on the news this afternoon. That's a good thing. Your essays are absolutely good enough, so they deserved to be selected."

Zhang Ye asked: "Did you help me out?"

Wu Zeqing replied: "No, how could I be of any help? I'm heading the SARFT, so I don't really know about all the happenings in the education sector anymore."

Zhang Ye was amused. "You really didn't do anything?"

"Hur hur, you must've been chosen based on the quality of your essays," Wu Zeqing said.

Nonsense!

Elder Qian told me about it. You obviously asked your friend from Fudan University to help me out!

Zhang Ye knew what she had done. He understood that Old Wu knew that he wasn't someone who wanted to depend on others for help. Every time Old Wu asked if he needed her help on anything, he would always say "No, I'll handle this on my own." After knowing each other for many years, and being in a relationship for a long time, Wu Zeqing understood his temper quite well. This was why Old Wu had quietly handled this matter and even pretended not to know anything about it.

Perhaps this was the greatest tenderness of all?

Even one's own wife would probably not go this far for her husband?

And if you think about it, Zhang Ye found out about this by chance. If he didn't know Elder Qian personally? If Elder Qian

didn't receive a call from his friend and find out? Then Zhang Ye would probably have never found out about what Old Wu had done for him!

And for similar things like this, how many times had it happened in the past?

How much more had Old Wu done for him without him ever knowing?

Zhang Ye felt warm and fuzzy inside. He and Old Wu were both the type that wasn't good at expressing their feelings. It was very difficult for them to say the words "I love you." Zhang Ye didn't know how to be romantic and wasn't good at getting into the good graces of a woman. Meanwhile, Old Wu wasn't the clingy type, nor did she know how to be all lovey-dovey. The way they expressed their affection for each other was very different from most other couples. But! Zhang Ye felt that it was great this way.

Yes.

It really was great.

Chapter 1219: Zhang Ye's new show is coming! (First Half)

The next day.

Zhang Ye's Studio was still in a celebratory mood.

The public also took some time to appreciate Zhang Ye's soaring popularity.

But it was at this time that something unexpected happened.

—These were troubled times.

—Gossip flies when a person gets popular.

These two sayings were the most apt descriptions of the entertainment industry. There were a lot of unrest and activities constantly going on. No one could predict what would happen next!

Central TV Department 1 announced without warning in the afternoon that they were going to begin production on the second season of The Voice. In fact, they were already midway through production, so it wouldn't be long before they met the audience again. In the announcement, it was even revealed that they would stick to the old ways and continue making the show in the same style as the first season of The Voice. There would be an all-new panel of guest coaches joining the show and an all-new production team of professionals to help recreate this classic reality show. They would bring the audience a most fresh and awesome audio sensory experience.

When the news got out, many people were shocked!

There was amazement all over Weibo!

"What?"

"Season Two of The Voice?"

"That's great, it's finally returning!"

"What so great about that? Isn't that show copyrighted to Zhang Ye?"

"Right, it was this exact matter that embroiled Zhang Ye and Central TV Department 1 in a lawsuit, so what's with this? Has Teacher Zhang made up with Central TV Department 1? Did he give them authorization to film the show?"

"That's impossible!"

"Look at what they said in the announcement. They mention that it's headed by an all-new production team!"

"Right, Zhang Ye couldn't have authorized them. Who doesn't know what his temper is like!"

"The Central TV Department 1 executives were even scolding Zhang Ye on Weibo last night on his essays getting selected for the Chinese language textbooks! They couldn't have made up so quickly overnight!"

"Then why does Central TV Department 1 still dare to call their show The Voice?"

"It's copyright infringement, right?"

"I'm utterly confused as well!"

No one in the industry expected that Central TV Department 1 would actually go against the grain and act so brazen. They even said they were already halfway through production?

At Zhang Ye's Studio.

Ha Qiqi said angrily, "What the heck are they trying to do!"

Zhang Zuo said, "Old Ha, didn't you say their show would adopt a name and format change?"

"Yeah," Ha Qiqi said, "that's why I don't understand what's going on either!"

Zhang Ye did not even hesitate and said, "Send them a cease and desist!"

And so, the law firm representing Zhang Ye's Studio immediately issued a Cease and Desist Letter to Central TV on the same day and sent someone to liaise with the courts.

The incident blew up!

Zhang Ye and Central TV Department 1 were going to go to court again?

However, the way things developed caught everyone by surprise!

Just as countless people's attention focused on this incident, Central TV Department 1 quickly deleted that promotional Weibo post and updated it with a new one. The official Weibo account of Central TV Department 1 announced that due to copyright issues, their new show would drop the name of The Voice and be known as Sing! instead. There would be some changes to the format of the show as well. At the end of the post, it even hinted that although the name was changed, the spirit of the show would still be the same.

Video publicity!

Advertising campaigns!

The promos went into full swing!

The name of Sing! was quickly made known to everyone too!

It was at this moment that everyone realized what was going on!

Central TV Department 1 knew that there would be a problem with the copyright, so they hadn't planned to produce the show as the second season of The Voice. Right from the start, they were planning to change the name and modify the trademarked segment where the coaches turned around in the chairs. By having a different look for the show, they were intending to continue doing The Voice as it was. But as they were afraid the audience would not

be convinced if they just announced this new show and inadvertently suffered a drop in viewers and notability of the show, they billed it as the second season of The Voice. Seizing the opportunity to publicize Sing! while the media's attention was all on Zhang Ye, it was their way of telling the audience that this was not an entirely new show, but in fact, the second season of The Voice! If this wasn't their intent, Central TV Department 1 couldn't have possibly reacted so quickly. It didn't even take a day for them to come up with another name for the show? And change the format of the show's segment? Even the publicity video was readily released after the announcement? It was impossible that they could do all that so quickly! They were riding on the name of Zhang Ye and The Voice!

Moreover, they had already deleted that previous Weibo post, so it wouldn't affect them much even if Zhang Ye's Studio sued them in court. There was no loss for them!

Some of Zhang Ye's fans started cursing.

"Fuck!"

"How can they be so despicable?"

"Damn, I've lost my faith in humanity!"

"They were scolding Zhang Ye on Weibo just last night but are now using his name and show to promote themselves? This is what Central TV Department 1 is? How can they do that?"

"What they're doing is really shameless!"

"If you all want to make Sing!, then go ahead. But why did you have to do it this way? Even back then, you were in the wrong first, no? The Voice is Zhang Ye's baby. You didn't want to pay Director Zhang for the copyright and even tried to steal it from him to sell it off. After that, he was even shipped off to the Documentary Channel while you continued to raise a ruckus about him until Central TV was forced to terminate his contract. In this

past year, you've continued scolding Zhang Ye on the Internet and criticizing him at various public events. But in the end? This was what you resorted to doing? Haven't you gone too far!"

Of course, some people didn't mind.

"Anything is fine as long as we get a second season of The Voice!"

"Right, I like this show so much. They mustn't shelve it!"

"Counting the days, it's about time the second season began. I'm really looking forward to it!"

"It's just a name change, we'll still watch it anyhow."

"Yeah, there are too few good singing shows, and The Voice and King of Masked Singers are the two most representative works in the genre. Since King of Masked Singers only ended a few months ago, I doubt there'll be a second season anytime soon. So there's only The Voice left to look forward to. I don't care if they change the name to Sing! They can call it Dog Shit for all I care! I'd still watch it!"

"Hurry up and start broadcasting please!"

"Just don't destroy the reputation of The Voice."

"I watched the promo vid and found it quite good!"

There was a lot of controversy!

A lot of attention was given to it too!

But this was exactly the effect Central TV Department 1 was going for. They knew that even though some people would scold them, those same people would still come and watch the show when it was broadcast. This was because there was no one to compete with their show, nor was there anyone who could compete with them. Among the singing shows, they would sweep away everyone else. As long as they could hold viewer attention on the show's premiere and make them realize that it was basically The Voice with a different name, then the viewers would give their

recognition to it. They wouldn't possibly just give up on the show just because Zhang Ye wasn't the director or the host. Other than Zhang Ye's diehard fans and some hot-blooded youths, not too many people were so principled and bothered by such things. In the end, what the people needed was entertainment, not some impossible to emulate person standing on stage speed-reciting some advertising messages!

The Voice was already an established show!

Therefore, Central TV Department 1 no longer had a need for Zhang Ye!

The host?

The director?

The guests?

It would all be the same whoever held those roles!

In 2016, contractual disputes arose between Talpa Holding, the owner of the show's format and franchise, and Canxing Production, the show's production company. It was revealed the former had inked a joint venture with another production company, Talent International, to produce the upcoming seasons of the show. In response to the dispute and to prevent copyright breaches, Canxing Productions launched Sing!, a rebranded version of the show which the producers claimed to come with an original format, though it still shares several similarities with The Voice of China.

Chapter 1220: Zhang Ye's new show is coming! (Second Half)

Later that afternoon.

At Zhang Ye's Studio.

Everyone was sitting in a meeting.

"They planned it all out!" Wu Yi said furiously.

Little Wang said, "Central TV Department 1 deliberately did it this way!"

Ha Qiqi said in anger, "By issuing our Cease and Desist Letter, we inadvertently helped them publicize the show and helped them let everyone know that The Voice has a new name. If we knew that this would happen, we shouldn't have played their game! We should've let them promote it longer with the name of The Voice before suing them!"

But Zhang Ye said, "That would be pointless. Even if we didn't say a thing, they would've come up with some other excuse. They aren't stupid."

Zhang Zuo slapped his thigh. "I'm pissed off!"

Ha Qiqi said indignantly, "Those people will really stoop to anything to achieve their goals? Why isn't Central TV Documentary Channel like that? We've worked with Central TV Sports Channel too. They're all very nice people, respectful, and professional in their work. But why does it have to be the largest channel that behaves like this?"

Everyone kept cursing for a long time.

Then, Zhang Ye's cell phone rang.

It was Chen Guang's wife, Fan Wenli.

Zhang Ye said: "Hello, Sister Fan?"

Fan Wenli asked: "Zhang'er, do you know about Sing!?"

"Let Central TV Department 1 do what they want. It doesn't matter to me," Zhang Ye said.

"Well, they just contacted Old Chen and me to ask whether we would like to return to the show as guest coaches." Fan Wenli's words seemed to hold a deeper meaning. "Do you think it will do well?"

Zhang Ye knew what she was getting at. "It should do well. Even without me, it shouldn't affect them much. The platform is already there, so even without any new breakthroughs in the show, the viewership ratings should still be quite good with them retaining the same format. Just go back with Old Chen, hur hur. You don't have to make your decision with me in mind."

Fan Wenli said: "Alright then, I'll think about it for a while longer."

Zhang Ye said graciously: "Sister Fan, there's no need to think too much about it. If the appearance fee is good enough, just go ahead. You can earn the money and gain publicity on TV at the same time. Only a fool would not accept."

Fan Wenli laughed and said: "Alright, I know what to do then."

Zhang Ye understood that Old Fan had called him to give him a heads up. The other party must have given her an offer she couldn't refuse, and she probably still had some feelings for The Voice. However, due to the rocky relationship between Zhang Ye and Central TV Department 1, she was slightly hesitant and probably felt bad about accepting the offer. But Zhang Ye did not think of it this way. Old Fan did not work for him, after all. She was just a friend and coworker, so if she had the chance to gain more fame and money, who was Zhang Ye to stop her? How could he? He couldn't be so particular about such things.

But to his surprise, Chen Guang called shortly afterwards.

The moment the call connected, Old Chen said: "Zhang'er, did Wenli call you earlier?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "What's the matter?"

Chen Guang said: "I'm telling you, however much that copycat version of The Voice offers me, I won't be joining them! What nonsense is that? Without you heading The Voice, I won't acknowledge them! But Wenli might be tempted to join, so I argued with her earlier. That woman is too short-sighted! She makes me so angry!"

Zhang Ye said: "Whoa, come on, did you two have to argue over this? It's not even a big deal."

Chen Guang said: "I can't control what she does. The Sing! program team has gotten in contact with the former guest coaches, but I've already spoken to Grandma Zhang Xia, and the two of us definitely won't accept. I didn't check with Sister Zhang, but I doubt that anyone other than you can move her. She probably won't accept the offer either. Only Wenli is keen on returning to the show. I'll speak to her again!"

"Don't."

"I'm terribly sorry."

"Aiya, that's enough."

The call ended.

The studio staff were looking at him.

Ha Qiqi asked, "Are both Teacher Chen and Teacher Fan going to join the production of Sing!?"

Little Wang said anxiously, "Then the show will be even more popular. With the old guest coaches holding the fort, Sing! will be able to shed the 'copycat' tag more easily."

Zhang Ye waved it off. "It's not like that. Sister Fan will probably join, but Old Chen isn't."

Zhang Zuo said, "That's not so bad then. What about Sister Zhang? Could Sister Zhang also..."

Zhang Ye said, "They can't get her to join."

Zhang Zuo heaved a sigh of relief. "Fortunately for us."

Zhang Ye turned serious and said, "Let's not talk about this anymore. We should discuss our fourth milestone in the 'Reach the Summit' plan."

The staff each had a copy of the document and information in their hands.

Zhang Zuo spoke, "The first three milestones have been successfully completed. It wasn't easy, but they've helped to build a very strong foundation for the latter part of our plan. For the fourth milestone, we need to create a reality show. We're thinking that since you have a foundation and made your name in this area, a lot of viewers will accept any new show that you come up with. At the very least, it would be propped up by the celebrity effect for a while. Besides, even though the popularity we received from the domain of TV shows is quite large, there's still a lot to be gained and could be expanded upon."

Ha Qiqi nodded and said, "Right. We've analyzed that the popularity you gained in many of the industries that you dabbled in has reached saturation. For example, in the field of Go, it would be pointless for you to beat any additional top players. All of the popularity that you could gain from there has already been earned. And in the field of literature, the previous three milestones you reached by winning the highest honor in the domestic literary field and breaking book sale records have also helped to peak your popularity. There isn't much you can improve on in those areas. There's only the domain of TV shows that we still have a lot of room to work in. There are tons of viewers in this area and the market is huge. Since everyone is receptive to your works, why don't we aim to bring up your popularity in this field to its

highest? By making another show that can outdo The Voice, A Bite of China, and King of Masked Singers?"

Zhang Ye said, "What are your suggestions?"

Ha Qiqi and Zhang Zuo gave each other a look.

One of them said, "We were originally going to suggest that you produce a singing show since that's what you are most familiar with. But things have changed. With Central TV Department 1 bringing out The Voice, a signature show, and us being from the old program team, we know full well how popular and loved this show is. So with this condition, it'd be difficult if we were to do a singing show as well."

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Why's that?"

Zhang Zuo said, "We can't fight fire with fire. If it were anyone else's show, that might be fine. We could probably still take them head on and fight it out! Who's afraid of whom! But The Voice was the most successful show we created, and it's going to have a second season. There'll be too many diehards around. If we really take them head on, it can only be a lose-lose scenario, and no one will be happy in the end. Moreover, our show's popularity would likely fall behind since The Voice has already accumulated a year's worth! Stripped to the waist, our new show is sure to suffer. Our objective isn't to compete with Central TV Department 1. We're looking to reach the summit of the entertainment industry. If both we and Department 1 suffer, the ones who'll lose more will be us!"

Ha Qiqi suggested, "Why don't we make a reality show instead?"

Wu Yi nodded and said, "A reality show is a pretty good idea."

"Yeah, there hasn't been much competition for reality shows recently!" Everyone was chipping in with their suggestions.

Zhang Ye looked at them and said, "Who says that if we film a singing show, we'll definitely end up suffering along with Central TV Department 1?"

"Ah?"

"What do you mean?"

Everyone was stunned.

Zhang Ye said, "The suggestion for a reality show isn't bad either." Thinking, he suddenly looked up and smiled. "I have an idea about a reality show combined with a singing show. Are you guys interested in hearing about it?"

A singing show?

A reality show?

Could these two be combined?

Everyone was stunned again. "What show?"

Zhang Ye narrowed his eyes and said, "I would like to call it: I Am a Singer."

Chapter 1221: Signing the new show!

That evening.

The people from Beijing Television rushed to the studio.

Two station heads and several staff members, including Hu Fei, had been sent over by Beijing Television to negotiate the contract after they received the news. They attached great importance to this matter. It was Zhang Ye's new variety show after all, so who in the industry wouldn't? Many of the television stations in the country would vie to get him!

One of the station heads shook hands with him. "Teacher Zhang."

Zhang Ye smiled. "Station Head Wang."

"Zhang'er, what kind of show are we talking about?" Hu Fei asked anxiously.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Don't be so anxious, Brother Hu. Let's sit down and talk."

Ha Qiqi had printed out several copies of the proposal they drew up and handed it out to the Beijing Television people. They eagerly started flipping through it the moment they got one from her.

Zhang Ye said, "Everyone, please take a look at the proposal."

I Am a Singer.

This was a very special show back in Zhang Ye's previous world. It was special in that it was different from many of the previous singing shows that came before it. For example, The Voice and King of Masked Singers were both used singing elements to sell the show. There was very little interaction between the contestants to display, the most being their intro clips or conversations with their mentors. But I Am a Singer was different. The show had elements of a reality show and did not require the contestants be masked. All of the contestants were famous singers the viewers would

recognize, and the truest side of these singers could be seen on the show. There would be scenes of the singers planning and practicing their songs, the slapstick draws to decide the appearance order, the celebrities going on about their private lives, singers making mistakes in their hosting roles, and comic relief provided by host-managers who attempted to "sign" their favored singers, among other things. There were many more variety elements, and the competition was more intense. No one in this world had ever attempted a show of this type before.

Actually, the analysis by Zhang Ye's team was quite right. They knew that it wouldn't be the wisest choice to film a singing show at this time. Central TV Department 1's Sing! was bearing down menacingly on the industry, and anyone who knew they were coming would back away. No one wanted to encounter Sing! at this time, and even many of the better reality shows would probably choose to avoid it. They were all afraid their attention would get taken away by the appearance of the show, much less those other similar singing shows around.

This wasn't a good choice!

Or rather, this was the worst decision to make!

Zhang Ye also understood what kind of show would be the most suitable and safest to make at this time, but it was just not in him to do so. If he wanted to be safe, he wouldn't have taken Central TV Department 1 to court. If he was wise, he wouldn't have tangled with the SARFT! In front of a potential "face slapping," everything else was secondary!

Aren't you people looking to challenge me?

Aren't you people trying to show me who is better?

Fine! Then I'll go all out and take you all on!

When the people from Beijing Television finished reading the proposal, they were astounded.

Hu Fei was the closest with Zhang Ye, having worked together on many occasions. Lecture Room and King of Masked Singers were both handled by the two of them. As such, he spoke first, "Zhang'er, how confident are you of this show? What I mean is, are you sure that this show can outperform The Voice?"

Zhang Ye shook his head. "I'm not sure."

Deputy Station Head Wang blinked. "Even you're not confident?"

But Zhang Ye just laughed and said, "What I mean is, if it were against my original version of The Voice, it would be quite difficult to put a finger on whose viewership ratings would be higher. It might not be able to outperform the ratings for The Voice, but if it were against that copycat show called Sing!, which is headed by an entirely different program team, director, host, and guests...."

The people from Beijing Television looked at him. "How will it do?"

Zhang Ye thought for a moment before replying calmly, "I'd beat them by ten blocks!"

Hu Fei laughed. "You sound really confident."

Zhang Ye said, "I guess so."

Deputy Station Head Wang was chuckled a little as well.

Then the Beijing Television people had a short discussion among themselves.

Finally, Deputy Station Head Wang nodded and said, "Teacher Zhang, we'll take your show. We'll do it like before, so let us know the production budget you require. We'll start with a base of 100 million RMB with no upper limits, and you may allocate the staff as you wish in your role as the executive director while Old Hu takes the executive producer role. You'll head the entire show's production with Old Hu as your assistant."

Hu Fei smiled and said, "When I asked you to be the executive

director for King of Masked Singers, you said no. This time, you better not reject me, alright? I'll be your assistant, hur hur."

Zhang Ye blinked. "It's settled just like that? Aren't you guys going to consider it for longer?"

Hu Fei said happily, "It's a show by you. There's no need to consider any further!"

These words were undoubtedly the greatest trust they could give Zhang Ye.

A staff member of Beijing Television suddenly asked, "Director Zhang, are you going to participate in the competition?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "If I'm going to be the executive director, I won't be participating."

Hu Fei said in surprise, "You won't be taking part? What a pity."

Zhang Ye spread up his hands. "If I participate in the competition as the executive director, how will the others see it? They'd definitely say that it's rigged and unfair. We have to handle this with the show's interest in mind and not screw it up with such controversies." He added with a laugh, "And besides, I'd definitely lose with so many elite singers taking part. That'd be too embarrassing for me."

Hu Fei said, "But what about your screen time? You've worked so hard to come up with a show like this. Surely we can't have you miss out on the benefits, right? It's not like you care about the money anyway."

Zhang Ye said, "Don't worry, Brother Hu. As the executive director, the screen time I'll get is much more than you can imagine."

Deputy Station Head Wang nodded to himself. In the field of show production, Zhang Ye was a very professional and responsible man. This was also what he admired most about Zhang Ye, who handled the situation in an unbiased manner. He was very

clear about such things and wouldn't bend the rules just because he could benefit himself. Even though what he said might sound simple, the truth was that there weren't too many people in the entertainment industry who would do things this way anymore.

The contract discussion was settled very quickly.

Then everyone began talking about the subsequent production issues that lay ahead.

Hu Fei asked, "How should we design the stage?"

Zhang Ye replied, "Modify the King of Masked Singers' stage a little?"

"That's fine, but it'll be very difficult to invite the singers. That's going to be an issue."

"That's right. We won't be inviting anyone who isn't good enough. All we target must know how to sing well, and it doesn't matter if they are has-beens. We don't care about the popularity of the person, just their singing skills."

"But this is a competition and no one likes to lose. It's especially true for singers who have been famous for a long time. In King of Masked Singers, they could at least hide behind a mask. Even if they got eliminated there, they could choose to not reveal themselves and leave the stage. The audience would never find out who they were, so it wouldn't be embarrassing to lose. But it's different for I Am a Singer. This is a serious elimination competition, so will the famous be willing to come on the show? Even if we double the appearance money, they might not..."

"I'll take care of that."

"Alright, then I have no other issues. What about you guys? Do you have any requests?"

Deputy Station Head Wang looked at Zhang Ye.

Zhang Ye chuckled. "My request is simple."

Deputy Station Head Wang said, "Feel free to request whatever you need."

Zhang Ye said, "I only have one request. Whichever day Sing! broadcasts on, I want to broadcast on that day as well. Whichever time slot Sing! broadcasts on, I want the same time slot as well!"

The people from Beijing Television didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Deputy Station Head Wang said, "Alright, let's sign the contract!"

Chapter 1222: The lineup of singers!

At night.

The people from Beijing Television left.

Ha Qiqi gave a wry smile. "Director Zhang, are we really going to do this?"

"We have to do it!" Zhang Ye insisted.

Wu Yi said loudly, "Damn, let's do it then!"

Little Wang cried out, "Yeah, who's afraid of whom!"

Zhang Zuo felt fired up. "Let's do it! We'll show Central TV Department 1 who the real big brother of the variety world is! Let's beat them once and for all!"

Tong Fu added, "At most, we'll get taken down along with them!"

Ha Qiqi glared at him. "That mouth of yours! Don't jinx it!"

Tong Fu quickly spat away his words and corrected, "What I meant was, we'll make a clean sweep!"

They had fought alongside Zhang Ye to the death, but their characters had become meeker ever since they joined Zhang Ye's Studio. This was because as staff of the studio, they had to behave in consideration of Zhang Ye. Their highest priority was to do things in his interest, so they had to be more cautious when handling any issues. However, their old passion was still burning as strongly as ever. When they got pushed into a corner like now, they would still follow Zhang Ye and hop around and swear back in anger!

Come on then!

Only one shall remain standing!

After work, the studio staff gradually left the office.

But Zhang Ye did not go and instead remained behind to make

some calls. Sing! was currently approaching anyone they could, probably because the guest coaches' roles had still not been filled yet. There were a lot of singers in the music industry, but only a small group of them were truly great singers, so there weren't really that many to choose from. If they could sign someone away, Zhang Ye would have one less person to choose from. The showdown between these two shows was not just a battle of the television station's capabilities, it was also a battle of funding and resources. He had to handle this pronto!

His first call went to Chen Guang.

The call connected.

"Zhang'er."

"Old Chen, did I wake you?"

"No, I was just arguing with my wife."

"Oh, come on, stop pretending already. How would a submissive husband like you dare to argue with her? Even if you had the courage of ten brave men, you still wouldn't do so. Old Fan is just going to join Sing!, that's all. Do you really take me to be so petty? Shouldn't you know me by now? So drop the act. If you really feel bad, how about giving your support to my new show? I just need you to say yes."

"Huh? A new show?"

"Yup."

"Why didn't I know about it?"

"It was finalized today. It's going to be called I Am a Singer."

"What? A singing show?"

"What do you think?"

"Whoa, this is quite a big deal. I'll have to give it some thought first."

"What do you still have to think about? This is a golden opportunity others don't even have a chance to take. Would I ever shortchange you? I've saved you a spot on a good show, so stop worrying and come."

"Hai, but I've never taken part in a competitive TV show before, so aren't you putting me in a difficult position?"

"Are you coming or not?"

"The competition on such shows is too much pressure!"

"Alright then, hand the phone to Old Fan. I'll speak to her regarding her joining Sing!"

"No, don't. I'll go, alright?!"

"That settles it then."

"Hai, I'm paying for my wife's mistakes!"

He had convinced one!

And it was even one of the biggest names in the music industry. Someone who was more famous than Fan Wenli, and a music legend whose singing prowess was top notch. Chen Guang's name was representative of an era, and more importantly, it was not a bygone era. This was his time, and having the support of someone like him was definitely a huge boost to I Am a Singer. Thinking about it, the issue of Old Fan joining Sing! no longer mattered. Securing Old Chen in exchange was definitely a much better deal.

Zhang Ye was on cloud nine. Then he made a call to another big name!

It was to Xiaodong, the leader of the famous Asian girl group, Spring Garden!

"Sister Dong, it's me."

"Zhang Ye."

"What are you doing? Why is it so noisy over there?"

"I'm preparing for our concert that'll be starting in several days."

"The nationwide tour? Then will you be free from the end of October until November?"

"Eh? Why?"

"My new show will be starting soon, so how about showing me some support? It's going to be a singing competition with all the big names joining. Please come on the show if you're confident in yourself."

"But I'm not confident in myself!"

Zhang Ye had no response.

"Heehee, can you summarize the show?"

Zhang Ye gave her a simple explanation, then said, "Li Xiaoxian has been on King of Masked Singers and proved that she's not only capable of singing idol pop, but has great singing skills. As a result of the show, she's gotten really popular all over China. As the leader of Spring Garden, how can you lose to her?"

"Teacher Zhang, are you trying to goad me? Xiaoxian might have gotten very popular, but didn't she still lose to you all the same?"

"I won't be taking part this time."

"You won't be taking part?"

"Yeah, it's because I know that you're very skilled at singing. Who in the industry doesn't know that? So what do you think? Are you interested in joining my new show? I'm sincerely inviting you. Just tell me the price."

"It's not a matter of money, I'm just not confident in myself. Who else will be joining?"

"That's confidential for now. But I can reveal this to you: None of them are your equal. Their popularity and singing aren't as good as yours. If you join, you'll definitely dominate the stage."

"Ah? Really?"

"Yep."

"Then I'll join! I'll join your show!"

"Great! Is Amy close by? I'd like to invite her as well."

After hanging up, another two people were just about in place!

Xiaodong indicated that she would be joining!

While Amy was seriously contemplating it!

Zhang Ye could lie through his teeth without blushing or his heart pounding. He had to trick whoever he could into joining the show!

After that, he called Grandma Zhang Xia. She was someone nobody would have expected him to approach. The moment the call connected, he started introducing the show to her.

Zhang Xia was very surprised on the other end of the line.
"You're asking me to join?"

"That's right."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm very sure."

"But I sing bel canto. Who would want to listen?"

"There are many ways of singing bel canto. What's more, it's not like you only know how to sing bel canto and folk songs, right? I don't believe that you don't know how to sing pop songs. Sometimes, one needs to adapt and blend in a little for the audience to be convinced. The development of bel canto singing has reached a bottleneck, so I believe it's time for you to step up to a new challenge."

"The stage belongs to the younger generation. Would I even be suitable?"

"No one is more suitable than you."

"But I'm so old and don't have the strength for such things anymore."

"You're only required to sing one song per week, so it really won't tire you much."

"Then let me consider it for a bit."

"Grandma Zhang, my dearest grandma, do you still need to consider it when we have this good a relationship? Just rest assured and boldly step up. This is definitely going to be the right choice. Would I possibly do you any harm?"

"That's hard to say."

Zhang Ye was speechless.

"Alright, alright, I'll tentatively give you my you."

"Great, thank you for your support, Grandma Zhang. By the way, are there any other good singers you could recommend to me? It doesn't matter if they're no longer active. You're the veteran here and have a lot more contacts and friends around. Why don't you recommend me a few people so that I can go and pay them a visit? Oh, and the appearance fees will definitely be the highest in the industry."

"Let me see who there is."

He secured another one!

Zhang Ye was starting to feel the pressure on him lightening. He had secured more than half of the lineup of singers. His social network was mediocre at best, and he didn't have that many friends. But of those he had, they all had great relationships with him. Those who understood Zhang Ye's temper knew what kind of person he was, which was why they gave him a lot of respect most of the time. This was why Zhang Ye could invite some of the celebrities most television stations could not.

Chapter 1223: Central TV Department 1 turns green with anger!

On this day.

At Central TV Department 1.

The Sing! program team started work early in the morning.

Jiang Yuan, the Deputy Director of Department 1, had come to check on their work. This was the tenth time he had dropped by to Sing!'s production office in recent days. For any of the other shows, the higher-ups would usually just check how everything was going at the start of production before approving the show's executive director and staff to handle the rest of the work. It wasn't feasible for the executives to come over every day to check on how everything was progressing. But Sing! was obviously different. Central TV Department 1 had a great deal of expectations for the show. The executives were also paying a large amount of attention to it with a "can't lose" attitude and determination. This was because it would be Central TV Department 1's biggest variety show this year, and it would have to get the results expected of it by sweeping away the rest of the variety show industry. That was the command issued from the top, which Central TV Department 1 would have to execute!

"Boss!"

"Director Jiang."

"Good morning, Director Jiang."

Jiang Yuan walked in with his hands behind his back.

The program team staff immediately stood up to greet him.

"Good morning, how's everything going?"

"Everything is proceeding smoothly."

"Has Fan Wenli agreed to join us yet?"

"We've already signed the contract with her. She's been secured!"

"Good, very good."

"But Chen Guang and Zhang Xia won't be joining. As for Sister Zhang, we've just contacted her manager, Fang Weihong. She says that Sister Zhang doesn't have a free slot in her schedule."

"It's good enough that we have a guest coach from the first season of The Voice. How about the promo work? Are you guys going all out on it?"

"We've already gotten started."

"How's the public's response?"

"The people are really looking forward to it. There are a lot of discussions regarding the show, and the Weibo topicality has already reached 200,000. That's never happened before!"

"Hur hur, that's good. Great job, everyone. As long as we get to the top spot of the nationwide viewership ratings, I'll personally apply to management for everyone to get recognized for their contributions!"

"Thank you, Director Jiang."

"We guarantee that we'll do a good job!"

"In the current climate of the variety show industry, no one is a match for us!"

"Yeah, the latest variety shows that Shanghai TV and Hunan TV did are no competition for us. After all, The Voice is exceedingly well-known for a TV show. After a year's break, the previous viewers will surely be anticipating it even more. Once the show starts broadcasting again, we've reason to believe that the old viewers will return and that there will be an influx of new viewers as well. Based on past experience, Sing! should do even better than the first season of The Voice in terms of viewership!"

Everyone felt loose and relaxed as they talked and laughed without pressure.

Why?

Because they had no opponents!

Not a single one!

Within the industry, in the entire satellite television market and variety show industry, there weren't too many shows as hot and phenomenal as The Voice. With its reputation out there, even if they filmed the show with their eyes closed, even with a change to the show's name, there would be no lack of viewers. The people would sit down at their televisions and wait for the show to be broadcast. This was the charm of having reputation and also the result that accumulated popularity could bring about. In the whole of the country, there was no one who could stop them! Unless some other phenomenal variety show were to suddenly emerge at this time, they would not be stopped. But no matter how they saw it, it was impossible for that to happen. King of Masked Singers had just ended a few months ago, so the second season couldn't possibly happen so soon. With such circumstances and without any opponents, they were simply invincible.

In this situation, the program team staff were all humming a song inside their heads.

How lonely it is to be invincible!

How empty it feels to be invincible!

The executive director of Sing! was even more exultant and in high spirits.

However, when they remembered that "Invincible" was written by Zhang Ye, they felt like they shouldn't be singing it in fear of bringing bad luck upon themselves. Zhang Ye's name was basically taboo in Central TV Department 1, and no one would dare mention it in front of the higher-ups without good reason. His name

represented the biggest enemy Central TV Department 1 had and was also a sore spot that could never be healed.

Everyone went back to discussing the follow-up production.

They talked about issues like the recruitment of the guest coaches, who were still missing two people.

Everything was progressing smoothly, and they could almost see Sing! sweeping across the entire country. However, it was at this moment that a staff member came running in panic!

"Something's happened! Something's happened!"

"What's wrong? Why're you in such a rush?"

"What's happened?"

"Aren't you the one who's responsible for inviting the guest coaches onto the show? Which celebrity has declined to join us this time?"

"If they don't wish to join us, so be it. What are you so alarmed about?"

Everyone looked at that employee, unsure of what had happened.

He didn't manage to invite someone as a guest coach?

Then just approach someone else. There were so many others in the music industry anyway. With their reputation and offering price, there shouldn't be too many people who would reject them. So was there any need to worry about having no big names for their guest coaches?

But for some reason, that employee was looking really flustered. Just as the program team members were looking at him impatiently and wondering what was going on, he brought them an earth-shattering piece of news!

Flustered, the employee said, "I just found out from a big shot of the music industry that other than us, another television station has approached him as well!"

Jiang Yuan was amused. "There's someone else who dares to produce a singing variety show at this time?"

The program team's executive director also smiled. "Who has the balls? They dare compete with us?"

The employee wiped away his sweat and said, "It's Beijing TV!"

An assistant director was taken aback. "Them?"

Another assistant director said, "So what? Must we make such a fuss?"

But the employee's next words gave everyone a fright!

Pulling a long face, he gulped and replied, "It's Zhang Ye's new show and Beijing TV has secured the rights to broadcast it! They intend to broadcast it at the same time as us!"

"What?"

"Say that again?"

"Zhang Ye is producing another singing show?"

"They're going to broadcast at the same time as us?"

Jiang Yuan blanched!

The executive director was dumbfounded!

A few of the assistant directors looked infuriated!

The entire program team of Sing! fell silent!

Then, this news galloped through the internal departments of Central TV!

...

Central TV Department 1.

"What?"

"Zhang Ye is coming back with a new show?"

"Holy shit! Damn!"

"Is he crazy? Why does he want to clash with Sing!?"

"Oh my god! That madman!"

"This is bad! This time, it's really bad!"

"No opponents? Looks like we've just gotten ourselves an opponent, fuck!"

"Is this for real? Isn't he busy receiving awards? Isn't he trying to get into the Chinese language textbooks? Isn't he off writing novels? Then why has this great demon king returned to the variety world?"

"He's doing this on purpose! He's definitely doing this on purpose!"

...

Central TV Sports Channel.

Yu Yingyi and her colleagues were also shocked at the news!

"Fuck, I have a bad feeling about this!"

"Me too, why do I have a feeling that Department 1 is going to flop hard!"

"Zhang Ye is back?"

"Pfft!"

"Teacher Yu, why are you laughing?"

"Did I laugh?"

"You did."

"Alright, I did. It's just that I am absolutely tickled by the way that my old classmate is behaving!"

...

Central TV Documentary Channel.

Zhang Ye's old colleagues here also didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

"Central TV Department 1 is gonna be in serious trouble this time!"

"They're too arrogant! It's good that this has happened!"

"Director Zhang has returned! Let's see how they'll deal with this!"

"I bumped into an assistant director of the program team from Central TV Department 1 yesterday. You should have seen that condescending look on his face thinking that they're unbeatable. I can't help but laugh at it now!"

"Me too, hahahahaha!"

"Good one, Director Zhang!"

"Beautifully played!"

"The faces of those people from Central TV Department 1 have probably all turned green!"

"What else! Bumping into Zhang Ye, who wouldn't turn green!"

Chapter 1224: The battle begins!

Meanwhile.

Beijing Television.

The program team for I Am a Singer was officially up and running.

Zhang Ye stood in the newly set up office with his arms wide open as he gave each of his old colleagues a hug.

Xiao Lu gave him a bear hug and exclaimed, "Teacher Zhang! I've missed you so much!"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "It's only been two months, hasn't it?"

"But it still feels like ages ago!" Dafei also went up to hug him!

Hou Ge laughed heartily. "We can work with Teacher Zhang again!"

His twin brother, Hou Di, laughed and said, "I really like working together with Teacher Zhang. There's nothing else that I can say except that I feel really happy and great!"

Zhang Ye said hello to all of them one by one. "How was the previous show you guys made? I heard that it wasn't too well-received?"

Hu Fei stared at him. "Kid, must you bring up that touchy subject?"

Zhang Ye laughed, "Haha."

Han Qi was on the list of the program team staff as well. During King of Masked Singers, she was The Clown's liaison with the program team, or more appropriately, his manager. She was also a diehard fan of Zhang Ye's, so she was very excited to see him again. "Director Zhang, please don't bring that up. The show did abysmally and we suffered a great loss because of it. In the end, the

final viewership ratings did not even cross 0.4%. We had to end broadcasting after only a month when the show was canceled by the station."

These days, it wasn't easy producing a reality show either.

Zhang Ye reassured everyone, "Don't worry, I'm back. So let's all work together and pull off another big one!"

Dong Shanshan arrived from outside at this moment. "Now that you're here, we don't have anything more to worry about. But what's this about me hearing that your new show doesn't require a host? What's that all about?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "That's how the show is set up. We'll have the singers take turns hosting the show. I didn't actually say that there wouldn't be a hosting position, Shanshan. You came at just the right time; I was going to look for you about something. Of course I'd have a good role lined up for you! Do you think that you can help lead the team of singers' managers for the show?"

Dong Shanshan gave him a look. "Of course! Did you even have to ask?"

Everyone laughed.

Dong Shanshan was the most popular host at Beijing Television. She was holding up two of the station's shows that were doing rather well in the viewership ratings. Based on her current status, it was actually quite a mismatch of qualifications to use her as one of the singers' managers in the show. But since she was Zhang Ye's old classmate, and based on their friendship, she agreed to it without a second thought. Zhang Ye also desperately needed someone as popular as Dong Shanshan to help him firm up the show. Other than her, no one could do it.

After a while, most of the program team staff arrived.

They sat together and delegated the roles according to the program proposal.

Then Zhang Ye started briefing them. "This show, it has the ability to advance Beijing TV within the industry. For example, there will be a regular cast of seven managers assigned to the singers during the show's run. This time, it won't be done like how we did it on King of Masked Singers, using the program team staff to liaise and wait on the singers' requests. I will need a dedicated team of real hosts to handle the job. Brother Hu, could you please take care of that for me and see which hosts are available and interested in taking the roles? Shanshan will be their team leader, which is definitely the best position there is. As for the remaining spots, I'll need to trouble you to give me some recommendations. I want the slightly more popular variety hosts that we have right now, but at the same time, they shouldn't be overly popular. I just need them to be someone the viewers are familiar with."

Hu Fei smiled and said, "I'll take care of that."

The show's segment where the host-managers played a part was a very important one. Although it might look like a sideshow, they would actually get a lot of screen time. It would help increase their popularity quite a bit and should be a good role to take. Just like in I Am a Singer back in Zhang Ye's previous world—there were quite a few hosts who became very popular overnight after getting paired with the singers as their managers. After I Am a Singer was broadcast here, it would definitely raise the standards of all of Beijing Television's hosting lineup, as well as bring about an increase in their influence. It was just that they couldn't see this effect since they were unsure of how it would work, although they would definitely understand what he meant after the premiere episode.

Zhang Ye continued assigning the roles for the program team.

"We can start prepping for recording."

"Right now?"

"Yes, right now."

"But it's still so early in production, and the stage hasn't been set up either."

"This new show is a little different from the other singing variety shows. Most of the time, we'll just be filming the singers' activities in front of the camera and behind the scenes. There's even a need to capture a portion of the ongoings in their private lives, like going around with the singer as they pack their belongings in preparation for the show. This is why we need to get everything planned out and ready beforehand as there are a lot of reality show elements."

"A reality show? Would that work?"

"Director Zhang, wouldn't that make it overly complicated?"

"Yeah, wouldn't that easily scatter the audience's attention? Isn't this supposed to be a singing show?"

"You guys will understand when the filming's done."

"Alright!"

"Understood!"

"Just assign us accordingly!"

Can it really work?

If Director Zhang says so, then it definitely will!

The advantage of working with his old team was that they could all trust him and had a tacit understanding of things. Whatever role Zhang Ye assigned the staff, they would all give 200% and wouldn't question why they had to do it that way.

After the roles were all delegated!

The rest of the tasks would be handled by Zhang Ye himself!

Grabbing people!

Racing against time!

Grabbing advertising sponsorships!

The battle with Central TV Department 1 was only just beginning!

...

On the very same day, the news leaked.

But of course, this couldn't really be kept secret. The media outlets and newspapers were all blown away by this news.

"Zhang Ye Returns!"

"Zhang Ye's New Show: I Am a Singer?"

"A showdown between giants in the singing variety show genre?"

"Archenemy of Sing! approaches!"

"Sing! likely to face enormous challenge!"

"I Am a Singer: A mantis trying to stop a carriage!"

"Central TV Department 1 and Beijing TV battle for the title of variety big brother?"

"The battle between Central TV Department 1 and Zhang Ye restarts!"

"Experts predict Sing! to score a resounding victory!"

On Weibo.

The netizens were also screaming in excitement!

"Damn, this is beautiful!"

"Zhang Ye has returned again!"

"Heavens!"

"This is so exciting! The more chaotic it is, the merrier I am!"

"Hahahahaha, this is going to be really interesting!"

"It will be an epic battle for sure! It's gonna be the ultimate slaughter!"

"I Am a Singer vs. Sing!, who does everyone think will win? I

think Sing! has the upper hand since they already have a reputation. They have a viewer base of over a hundred million people. Even with a name change, the TV station behind it remains the same. They'll still be doing the same thing, so a lot of people should be able to accept it, right? With this dominance, Zhang Ye's new show that appeared from nowhere should be at a disadvantage no matter how I look at it!"

"That might not be true. Sing! is still not exactly the second season of The Voice. They've changed the program team, director, host, and I think even the guest coaches are not the same. Whether everyone can accept it is still not guaranteed. We still can't be sure of whether the viewers are convinced by the reputation of The Voice or the reputation of Zhang Ye. I, for one, am convinced by Zhang Ye alone. The Voice was created by him and is a very strong representation of him. So I'll only look at who makes the show, not what the show is! In my opinion, The Voice will only be The Voice if Zhang Ye is in charge. Any other versions are imitations!"

"Why didn't Zhang Ye just go ahead and record the second season of The Voice? He holds the copyright to it, after all."

"There should be a limitation clause in the contract that Zhang Ye signed with Central TV Department 1. Although The Voice's copyright and naming rights are with him, as long as he isn't working with Central TV Department 1 to create the show, he isn't allowed to authorize it to any other TV network. This should've been written into the contract. That's why Central TV Department 1 has chosen not to use the name of The Voice, and that applies to Zhang Ye too."

"So what is I Am a Singer gonna be like?"

"I don't know!"

"Let's just wait and see. They have begun fighting!"

"Let's see which is better!"

"Yeah, it's time for a showdown!"

"The rising wind portends the coming storm!"

"I can already see a bloody clash happening!"

Chapter 1225: The fight for advertisers!

The next day.

In the morning.

At a restaurant serving stews.

It was relatively quiet at this time as everyone was at work. The restaurant had just opened for the day, and no customers had entered yet. Then a young man wearing sunglasses walked in from outside.

The restaurant owner had sharp eyes and recognized him. "Ah, Zhang Ye!"

Several of his employees' eyes lit up. "Zhang Ye?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Are you open yet, boss?"

"Yes, yes, we're open!" The boss was ecstatic. "We warmly welcome you, Teacher Zhang. Why do you have so much free time today? Talk of you making a new show is all over the news!"

Zhang Ye chuckled and said, "Yeah, I came here to meet someone for business."

The boss said, "Why is a person of your status coming to our small restaurant? You've really graced us with your presence. Please, come in and have a seat."

Zhang Ye found a place to sit down. "I've eaten here before and found your stews quite authentic. But I wasn't famous at that time, so you didn't recognize back then."

The boss started trembling in excitement as though he was shot with adrenaline!

Zhang Ye's eaten here before?

He even likes the taste of our food?

If this got out, wouldn't their restaurant become super popular?

Soon after, the CEO of Brain Gold, Wu Mo, also arrived. "Yo, Brother Zhang, you're already here? Have you ordered yet?"

"Not yet. I was waiting for you, wasn't I?"

"I want a large bowl with extra tripe please."

"Sure, I'll have the small one without any vinegar, but please add extra garlic sauce."

The boss personally went into the kitchen as he said, "Alright, please look forward to it!"

He was pretty attentive to the situation too. After he whispered something to his employees, they went over and shut the doors. He closed the entire restaurant for Zhang Ye.

The stews were served.

The two of them talked as they ate.

Zhang Ye chewed on a pork lung. "Do you want to take the title sponsorship of I Am a Singer?"

"Your new show?"

"Yes."

"Is it good?"

"Of course it's good. Why else would I offer it to you?"

"To be honest, I'm really quite interested."

"Then let's talk."

"How much is the title sponsorship fee?"

"200 million RMB."

"Whoa, are you asking for my life?"

"That's already very low; it's a fair price."

"You call that low? Which variety show have you ever seen asking for 200 million RMB for the title sponsorship? 150 million was the highest, and that's even the record created by King of

Masked Singers!"

"If you're not interested, I'll go to someone else?"

"Make it a little cheaper."

"You won't make a loss on 200 million yuan. Your company is the leader of the health supplements industry, so what's 200 million to you? You'd earn all that back within half a year. Become the title sponsor for I Am a Singer and I guarantee your sales figures will double. I only asked for a 100 million from you for the first season of The Voice, but look at how much you earned from that."

"Aiya, we can't compare things like this."

"Do you want it or not?"

"Alright, I give in!"

"I'll get someone to send you the contract later."

He finished eating his bowl of stew.

Zhang Ye got up and asked, "Boss, how much?"

"That'll be a total of 45 yuan," the boss shouted.

Zhang Ye took out his wallet and placed the money onto the table before turning to leave.

Wu Mo was speechless. "You're leaving just like that?"

Zhang Ye waved with his back facing him. "I'm really busy. There's still a pile of things waiting for me to do."

Wu Mo rolled his eyes and said annoyed, "Great, a deal worth 200 million RMB and all I get in return is a 25 yuan bowl of stew. And you're even leaving first? Real great." He lowered his head and continued eating by himself.

Zhang Ye no longer needed to be as polite with him. Brain Gold had become the leading health product in the market by leaps and bounds and was the top brand in the industry. It was earning more and more money now, and Zhang Ye could partly be credited with

that. Whether it was him endorsing Wu Mo's company product in the commercial at the beginning, or Brain Gold becoming the title sponsor of The Voice later on, all of it brought great benefits to the Brain Gold Company. It turned a small company on the brink of bankruptcy around and launched it into the leading health product brand in the entire country. This was also the reason for the good relationship between Wu Mo and Zhang Ye. Of course, the key reason was that Wu Mo was Wu Zeqing's nephew. When Zhang Ye and Wu Zeqing got married, Wu Mo would have to address him as his uncle-in-law based on their statuses. As such, Zhang Ye was not as polite with him as before.

It was just that Wu Mo did not know about all of this as of yet.

...

Elsewhere.

Central TV Department 1.

The Sing! program team staff had all been on guard since yesterday. Everyone was kept extremely busy in their panic, not because they were easily flustered, but because their opponent was too formidable. When faced with this person called Zhang Ye, none of the program team members dared to neglect their duties!

"We've tied up the advertisement sponsorship deal with Donghe!"

"Good! Well done!"

"Lele Mineral Water's advertisement sponsorship has been confirmed too!"

"Has the title sponsorship been settled yet?"

"We're waiting for their decision. The other party is still haggling over the fees!"

"If they don't want it, find someone else!"

"There's no one else. Those who can offer more than a 100 million in title sponsorship fees number no more than twenty

corporations!"

"I heard that I Am a Singer is also fighting for advertisers!"

"How can a new program team like theirs possibly compete with us?"

"But many of the advertisers have already been snatched away by them. Like the one we locked up earlier. They've also been pried away by I Am a Singer!"

"How shameless!"

"How can they behave like this?"

"Isn't that against the industry's rules?"

Suddenly, an assistant director from the program team walked in and announced in excitement, "We've got it! The title sponsorship has been finalized! 160 million RMB!"

"Ah!"

"This is great!"

"160 million? What an astronomical figure!"

"That has broken the record!"

"We'll crush I Am a Singer this time!"

"Hahahaha, this title sponsorship fee is even higher than what King of Masked Singers got!"

"It's a totally unprecedented amount in the industry!"

"Release the news straight away!"

"Yes, Boss!"

The news got out!

The industry was shocked!

The public was amazed!

Sing!'s title sponsorship was sold for 160 million RMB?

The title sponsorship fee might look like it had nothing to do with the quality of a show or had no relation to the viewership ratings it would get. But in actual fact, it was a very important symbol and an indicator of things, as those with the ability to sponsor such an amount were very smart people. The title sponsorship fee would also reflect how optimistic the sponsors were about a show. Since they were willing to pay over a 100 million for it, that meant they expected it to reap a figure that would far exceed what they put in.

Sing! was highlighted in the news once again!

The program team of Sing! also became famous as a result!

Quite a few industry insiders and netizens were heatedly discussing this record-breaking astronomical title sponsorship fee!

But just as Central TV Department 1 was preparing to celebrate their first victory, Beijing Television's official Weibo released even more shocking news!

I Am a Singer's title sponsorship had been sold to Brain Gold!

The title sponsorship fee: 200 million RMB!

The industry insiders were flabbergasted!

The citizens were also stunned!

"Holy fuck!"

"Has the Brain Gold Company gone mad?"

"200 million yuan? Does their fucking money grow on trees?"

"Yeah, it's like this sum doesn't mean a thing to them!"

"Wasn't Brain Gold the title sponsor for the first season of The Voice? What's the meaning of this? They won't be continuing their relationship with Sing!? They're giving their support to Beijing TV?"

"Can they really recoup an investment of 200 million yuan?"

"Who the hell knows? That sum is insane!"

"The record's been broken again?"

"Central TV Department 1's 160 million RMB title sponsorship fee had already given me such a shock. Then, in the blink of an eye, this news about the 200 million RMB title sponsorship fee was released? Oh my god! Do they not need to leave some money for rainy days?"

"Central TV Department 1 has been slapped in the face hard!"

"Pfft, looks like Zhang Ye has outdone them again!"

"Sing! still couldn't beat I Am a Singer in the end!"

"Did they really spend 200 million RMB on that, the fuck?"

"Unbelievable!"

The media was shocked!

Central TV Department 1 was also dumbfounded!

Many on the Sing! program team were left cursing and swearing!

"Based on what!"

"200 million?"

"Is Brain Gold crazy!"

"They're gonna go bankrupt!"

"For a new show with no indicators of past performance, they actually paid that much for the title sponsorship?"

Nobody could understand and all felt a sense of frustration. They felt like they had been played by Zhang Ye. They had rushed to announce their title sponsorship fee had broken the record. But just 30 minutes later, they were slapped by I Am a Singer's program team. This was clearly a huge blow, and many of them could not accept it!

Why?

Based on what?

They were all asking this in their heads.

A deputy director from Central TV Department 2 happened to pass by and bump into several program directors of the Sing! program team.

The executive director of Sing! sighed, "Director He."

Deputy Director He asked, "What the matter?"

The executive director said, "Nothing."

Deputy Director He was on rather good terms with him as he had brought this director up within the station. "If you say it's nothing, that means there's something."

The executive director hesitated for a moment before saying, "I just don't get how we're losing."

Deputy Director He could see that they were feeling really bad. He shook his head and couldn't help but say, "Don't forget who your opponent is: the best director of the television variety world who's also the record holder of the top viewership ratings and title sponsorship fee. He's the gold standard in the country's television variety circle. If I have to be blunt, just the name of 'Zhang Ye' alone is valued at 200 million. There's nothing to be ashamed of even if you all lose to him."

The executive director gave a bitter smile.

Zhang Ye?

What a legend indeed!

This sort of person was truly too difficult to deal with!

Chapter 1226: I Am a Singer's promotional video!

The fight for advertisers came to an end!

In the following days, the battle for publicity officially began!

Many industry insiders and onlookers were watching this unfold with their hearts in their mouths!

"Wow, take a look at People's Daily!"

"Damn, I Am a Singer has taken out an entire page in People's Daily!"

"How lavish was that? How much did that cost?"

"I wonder how many days they'll advertise in the Party's newspaper."

"Hey, everyone. Quickly take a look at Beijing Daily, Shanghai Daily, and Huadong Morning Post. The ad pages have all been bought out by Sing! What the fuck!"

"Tianhe Discussion Forums' ad spot on the main page is running an ad for I Am a Singer!"

"TT Messenger's pop-ups are all filled with Sing! ads!"

"These two program teams must have gone fucking insane!"

"I've never come across such hardcore promotions before!"

"How wealthy! They're way too fucking wealthy!"

"I take my hat off to them. They're taking the fight all across the country!"

"This has got to be the biggest publicity battle in the history of variety shows, right?"

"How much hatred do they have for each other? It seems like they're really trying to do each other in!"

"Let them fight it out. Sing! has already lost the fight for advertisers, so let's see who'll win in the battle for publicity!"

In the various major forums!

In the various major newspapers!

On the various major chat apps!

Without an exception, all of them had become battlefields between the two shows!

The publicity battle was so widespread that even those in the music and film industries were alarmed. As they were preparing to promote their new albums, concerts, and films, they discovered they couldn't get any good spots for publicity in the media. Almost all of the critical advertising spots had been bought up by Sing! and I Am a Singer! All along, the film industry had been acknowledged as the heaviest spending industry in the entertainment circle. Be it their actors' salaries, promotional budgets, or production investments, they were the highest among the related industries. But who could have thought that the film industry would be shocked and outdone by two variety shows!

Just how many advertisement spots had they bought?

How much money had they spent on buying all those spots?

10 million?

20 million?

Just these sums spent would have been enough for the film industry to produce a budget idol film. Could they really be that well-off? And this was just the beginning? Could it be that the variety shows' production fees would go over 200 million RMB? What was 200 million good for? It was enough for them to hire the best director in the country and the best A-listers to make a film for the Chinese New Year holidays! Thinking about that, the film industry's people were unable to keep calm!

This was too much!

This was too frightening!

...

Actually, even Beijing Television couldn't keep calm.

At I Am a Singer's program team office.

Hu Fei said nervously, "Zhang'er, we've already spent over a 100 million!"

"OK, it'll be fine." Zhang Ye replied calmly, "Let's keep buying ad spots!"

Hou Ge exclaimed, "We're still buying more? Don't we have enough?"

Zhang Ye shook his head. "We're still far from enough. Since Central TV Department 1 wants to fight us in this publicity battle, we must not let them to oppress us. We'll battle them. Isn't it just a matter of who can dump more money! Don't worry about it, everyone. The money we spend now will come back multiple times over. If we're going to do this, we must up our stakes!"

Dafei didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "But the stakes are getting too high!"

It was indeed a little too much!

But all of it would be worthwhile!

I Am a Singer's greatest weakness was that it did not have any accumulated popularity to fall back on. In Zhang Ye's previous world, during the first three seasons of I Am a Singer, the reputation of the show declined season after season. But because it had accumulated its popularity and became very well-known to a lot of people, the viewership ratings got better and better with every season. The total online views of the show even managed to double. But Zhang Ye did not have the luxury of time over here. That was why they had to carry out such intense promotions for

the show. He was going to spend as much as required just to up the promotions. He wanted to give I Am a Singer the most explosive viewership ratings right from the start of the first season and make it an instant hit!

All that he had done were child's play compared to this. Whether it be The Voice, A Bite of China, or King of Masked Singers, their production budgets were all too limited. The promotional budget in those shows were all raised by scrimping and saving on other production costs. But Zhang Ye did not intend to have it this way for I Am a Singer. Beijing Television had placed their trust in him and given him an unlimited budget. After pulling in Brain Gold's 200 million title sponsorship fee and other advertiser sponsorships, it gave him the freedom to spend without consideration. Further, there was still the online video hosting site's exclusive broadcast rights fee that was yet to be sold!

So why not play a big one this time!

Zhang Ye couldn't wait any longer, and neither could the plan to reach the summit!

I Am a Singer was not only a show that Beijing Television had a lot of expectations for, nor was it just a show that Zhang Ye wanted to use to face-smack Central TV Department 1 with, it was also the fourth milestone in Zhang Ye's "Reach the Summit" plan. Zhang Ye wanted to use I Am a Singer to fulfill the potential popularity he could achieve from the variety world so that he could ascend onto the altar!

Zhang Ye said, "Oh yes, earmark 2 million RMB from the production budget."

Xiao Lu asked, "Alright, what will it be used for?"

Zhang Ye said, "To film a promo video."

Hou Ge was taken aback. "A promo video? How many minutes will it be?"

"Around one minute." Zhang Ye's answer was shocking.

Everyone in the program team gasped. "Just one minute? Two million RMB? Director Zhang, isn't that too much?"

Zhang Ye said, "I'll personally take charge of the production of the promo video. I want to have the best equipment, the best production staff, and the best special effects!"

"Uh..."

"Alright then!"

"Whatever you say."

...

Several days later.

The promotional video for Sing! was released!

Just watching it, it was clear that it was a big production and a lot of money had been spent on it. The style and colors used were basically a continuation of the approach used in The Voice. Although it wasn't really anything new, the video was still beautifully produced.

The netizens were all praising it!

"That's pretty good."

"Eagerly awaiting the broadcast!"

"The promo is really nice!"

...

A day later.

I Am a Singer's promotional video was officially released!

Many people paid special attention to it, because everyone knew what kind of a show Sing! was since they've watched The Voice before. But they had no idea what sort of a singing show I Am a Singer would be. Even many of the industry insiders did not know

anything since Beijing Television had not revealed much information about it. Zhang Ye's program team also requested to work on the show under a veil of secrecy and did not even want to reveal the list of participating singers. It was as though they were trying to remain mysterious right until the very end. So in the absence of any information, everyone was curious and looking forward to seeing the promotional video!

At 8 PM.

The promotional video would get its first broadcast on Beijing Television.

Zhang Ye's parents turned on the television.

Chen Guang and Fan Wenli were both sitting in the living room in wait.

Xiaodong and Amy were watching eagerly.

Many people in the industry had tuned in to watch right on time.

The background music played soothingly as an image appeared on screen!

Then Zhang Ye's magnetic voice sounded.

"The sound of a person falling.

"Is much louder than a group of people living.

"A moment of despair in someone.

"Carries the significance of dying once.

"Does life gets renewed, or does it end?

"All of it decided by the choices of every moment and every second.

"Music is not the goal, but a state of living.

"Please doubt me!

"Mock me!

"Hurt me!

"I shall greet life facing backwards.

"Why do we sing? So that we stop being afraid.

"Music is fearless.

"I...Am...a...Singer!"

A short 52-second promotional video ended!

But those who caught this promotional video the moment it was broadcast were all left with shocked expressions for a very long time. The images, colors, special effects, and voice over were all superb!

I Am a Singer's promotional video shot up to trending on the search engines!

Praise and shocked reactions were all over Weibo!

"That was fantastic!"

"How is this a promo!"

"Right? It was too artistic! The visuals in it can all be used as my desktop wallpaper!"

"It's so exquisite, concise, and artistic all at once. It's awesome!"

"Zhang Ye's amazing at creating stuff like that!"

"You can immediately see how good it is!"

"That voice over paired with the visuals and music made my heart race!"

"It's much better than Sing!'s promo! They've been flung two streets away!"

"Pfft, it looks like Sing! has lost the publicity battle as well!"

"They can't complain about that! Zhang Ye is Zhang Ye, after all!"

"I'm looking forward to I Am a Singer even more now!"

"Based on just this promo alone, I'll catch the show when it broadcasts!"

There were heated discussions everywhere!

Many of the industry insiders could not help but give it a Like!

A famous advertisement director declared on Weibo: "A wonderfully produced promotional video!"

A program director from Shanghai Television: "I've watched it six times already. This is truly art."

A little-known film director: "By creating such an artistic promotional video with an attitude of seeking perfection, the show they come up with shouldn't be bad."

The promotional video was on fire!

No one expected how hot it was getting!

It was so hot that it didn't make any sense!

Comparatively, Sing!'s promotional video was looking more dismal by the second!

This was not to say that Sing!'s promotional video was bad. But things did not stand up well to comparison. Once they were compared, the shortcomings became glaring! To be exact, this wasn't a case of Sing! losing to I Am a Singer. It was just that the gulf between the director of the Sing! promotional video and Zhang Ye was too wide!

As well as the difference in the production budgets!

How much was spent on the former's promotional video?

Tens of thousands?

Hundreds of thousands?

And what about the latter?

A full two million RMB was put into it in order to create it!

...

At Beijing Television.

Inside I Am a Singer's program team office.

Xiao Lu laughed loudly. "We've won! We've won again!"

Hou Ge said, "This video is so wonderful!"

Dafei said, "Two million? Totally worth it!"

"We're trending at number three in the searches!" Han Qi said, pleasantly surprised!

Hu Fei gave Zhang Ye an acknowledging nod.

Zhang Ye smiled back. This promotional video had been carefully chosen by him and came from the fourth season of I Am a Singer back in his previous world. Zhang Ye kept the video's artistic direction mostly intact but added in his own ideas and special effects for the images and music. This was to give the viewers a greater sense of visual impact with a more powerful feel. Every frame and detail was repeatedly hammered out. Otherwise, it couldn't possibly have cost two million yuan to produce!

Everything was now ready!

There was only the official recording left to film!

The highest title sponsorship fee in the industry, the highest production budget in the industry, the highest promotional budget in the industry. There were too many of "the highest in the industry" contained within this show called I Am a Singer. Zhang Ye had given his full effort so he wouldn't have any regrets later. He vowed to make I Am a Singer a classic, landmark variety show!

Chapter 1227: We have never lost before!

The venue was being prepared.

The promotions were ramped up.

The troll armies were flinging insults at each other.

Day by day, it was getting closer and closer to the broadcast of the two shows.

On the day that Central TV Department 1 suddenly announced their broadcast time for Sing!, Beijing Television swiftly followed with an announcement for I Am a Singer's broadcast time!

The same day!

At the same time!

Not a second earlier or later!

When this news was released, everyone in the industry was shocked!

Meanwhile, the netizens were feeling pumped up and delighted by the news!

Lately, these two shows were the most anticipated variety shows with no others coming close. In the history of the variety world, there hadn't been any shows that carried out such widespread publicity campaigns like it didn't cost a thing. Everyone knew that it would be the best choice for these two most anticipated shows to broadcast at different times so they could avoid directly competing with each other. But Zhang Ye did not do that as he chose to broadcast at the exact same time and on the same day as Sing! It was just like what had happened with A Bite of China. This was Zhang Ye and he had always done things in this way. He would either choose not to fight at all, or go all out if he did!

The countdown began!

The desperate struggle between the two shows was finally

starting!

Who would lose?

And who would win?

No one could predict it!

...

Noon that same day.

At home.

Zhang Ye's parents were busy preparing lunch.

When the doorbell rang, his mother tossed off her apron and wiped her hands clean. Then she hurriedly went to open the door with a smile on her face. "Coming, coming."

Wu Zeqing was standing outside. "Auntie."

His mother smiled and said, "Ai, Little Wu, come in quickly."

"Little Wu, you're here?" His father also came out of the kitchen with a smile.

Wu Zeqing smiled. "Uncle, you're busy?"

His father said, "Lunch is almost ready. Go and call Little Ye over."

Wu Zeqing asked, "Where is he?"

"He's lying in his room. He's been tired out by work the past few days," his mother said happily.

"OK, I'll go and get him." Wu Zeqing went to his bedroom and pushed open the door. "Little Ye?"

Zhang Ye was lying on the bed and mumbled, "You're here?"

Wu Zeqing smiled. "Is the show going to be broadcast soon?"

Zhang Ye said, "I was actually planning it for a little later but had to match Sing! pushing forward their broadcast date. I had to put in some overtime at work as a result. The good thing is that just

about everything is ready. We'll begin officially recording I Am a Singer's first episode tomorrow. Hai, I haven't really had much sleep the past few days. The executives at the station are the ones who chased me home so I could rest well today. How could I rest? I can't even sit still for long."

Old Wu said, "Alright, let's have lunch first."

They started eating.

The whole family was seated at the dining table eating lunch.

But Zhang Ye was preoccupied with his thoughts. He didn't even take two bites before putting down his chopsticks.

His mother stared at him. "Eat."

Zhang Ye whined, "I have no appetite."

Wu Zeqing could sense what he was thinking about. "Are you feeling nervous?"

"Not exactly." Zhang Ye sighed, "But I'm under a lot of pressure."

His father said, "You? Under pressure?"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "Of course. Do you know how many people I'm supporting?"

Zhang Ye was the type of person who was very mentally strong. In normal circumstances, he would hardly feel any stress and was more carefree. But now that he had reached this position where his popularity was getting higher and higher, the people who depended on him for their livelihoods were also increasing. No matter how strong he was, he couldn't possibly feel no pressure. What if he lost this battle? What if he didn't manage to do well? How would he answer to Beijing Television? How could he recoup the 200 million in title sponsorship fees that Wu Mo had pumped in? What about his staff at the studio? The higher he climbed, the more he couldn't afford to lose. He was no longer a general without an army. It was just that he rarely displayed any of such worries

and stress in front of others.

Zhang Ye had been in such situations in the past. Back then, it was always Wu Zeqing who pointed him the way forward. So he looked at her. "Old Wu, you oversee the entertainment circle and have come across many shows. You have read the content approval report for I Am a Singer, right? I'll tell you about the specifics of the show segments again. Let me know what you think of it after and whether it can win against that copycat version of The Voice. Listen, the show will have seven designated singers..."

Before he could finish.

Wu Zeqing cut him off. "I don't want to listen to that."

Zhang Ye was taken aback. "Why not?"

"Because I don't have to listen to it." Wu Zeqing smiled and grabbed some food for him. She said, "Who are you? You're Zhang Ye, the best program director in the industry. The shows you produce will definitely be number one in the country. This is something that you don't even have to have a doubt about—no one can beat you, none of the major satellite channels, not even Central TV Department 1. As long as you put your mind to it, as long as you do it seriously, no one in the industry is a match for you."

Zhang Ye cheered up. "Phew, about that, can you not worship me to such an extent?"

His mother rolled her eyes. "Rascal, stop being conceited."

"What you need now is rest and a good meal." Old Wu grabbed some more food for him and said, "The battle will officially start tomorrow, so eat up."

Zhang Ye smiled. "OK, I got it."

Old Wu was truly capable!

It only took her a few words to bring Zhang Ye's fighting spirit

back up!

Everyone knew that Zhang Ye was one of the toughest people in the entertainment circle. But no one knew that behind this toughness, there were times he would hesitate and doubt himself. There were also moments of weakness and confusion. Luckily for him, he had Wu Zeqing by his side. She always pulled him up in those critical times.

Zhang Ye didn't actually think that he was a very strong person. It was only when Old Wu was beside him that he could feel invincible and indomitable!

After lunch.

His cell phone rang. It was a video call.

As Zhang Ye had been forced to go on leave today, the I Am a Singer program team would only hold a video call with him to seek his instructions when something cropped up at work.

The video call connected.

Everyone started updating him on their work.

Zhang Ye acknowledged them one by one.

Finally, Xiao Lu said nervously to him: "Teacher Zhang, will we really be able to do it tomorrow?"

Many of the others in the video call kept quiet. Each and every one of them had the same expression as Zhang Ye had earlier. There was anticipation, tension.

Zhang Ye thought for a moment before giving them a long speech through the phone's video camera. "I know that we're really disadvantaged right now. On number of contacts, Central TV has a better network than us. On influence, Central TV's influence is much greater than ours. On the size of the audience base, Central TV has many more viewers than we do. On the show, Sing! has a greater accumulated following and popularity. That's why for our

battle with Central TV Department 1, it would be bullshit if I said that I'm not feeling pressured."

Xiao Lu gave a wry smile.

Dafei had a frown on his face.

Hou Ge was breathing hard.

Han Qi kept rubbing her hands together to hide her unease.

Zhang Ye smiled. "But we have an advantage too."

Advantage?

What advantage could we have?

Everyone stared at Zhang Ye in the video call.

Zhang Ye emphasized each word he said. "Our advantage is: We! Have! Never! Lost! Before!"

Xiao Lu was inspired!

Han Qi raised her head!

Hou Ge and the others were jolted!

Those words were so domineering!

Only Zhang Ye would dare to speak like this!

In the entire industry, only Zhang Ye could say something like this!

Yes! They have never lost before!

To be precise, it was Zhang Ye who had never lost before!

Talk Show?

The Voice?

A Bite of China?

King of Masked Singers?

He had never lost!

And that was their greatest advantage!

Chapter 1228: Recording begins!

The next day.

It was a rainy morning.

At Central TV Department 1, in the recording studio for Sing!

"Camera 1."

"Ready."

"Lights."

"They're all working fine, Director."

"Is Teacher Fan Wenli here yet?"

"She's getting her makeup done."

"Good, get ready to roll the cameras!"

The audience had already entered the studio. In the huge venue, there were no empty seats. Many of the audience members could not calm themselves as they kept looking at the stage and exchanging whispers from time to time. It was still very much the same setup that Zhang Ye had created back during the first season of The Voice. However, the logo had been slightly modified and the colors of the stage were also a little different. The four guest coaches' chairs also no longer looked like the rotating type of seat. They were now blocked at the front with a screen so that whatever was happening on stage could not be seen by the guest coaches sitting in them. It also looked like the screen could be raised or lowered. As for the rest of the structures, they were virtually untouched.

"Are they recording yet?"

"Hurry up, I can't wait any longer!"

"I'm really looking forward to it. I hope there'll be more contestants similar to the common folks we saw in Season One,

like Qian Pingfan, Luo Yu, and Old Master Zhou Danian. Those contestants on Zhang Ye's The Voice were all shockingly good!"

"Yeah, brilliant talent walks amongst the common folk!

"I don't find the ordinary people who sing to be any worse than pro singers."

"Right, some of them can sing even better than pro singers."

"Ah, it's starting. Someone's coming out!"

"Is that the host?"

"Murong?"

"Murong is the host?"

"She's that really popular Spring Festival Gala host for Central TV!"

"But speaking fast isn't really her style, is it?"

"I don't think she can speak at Zhang Ye's speed."

"Hai, what a pity. Sing! can replicate everything except for the hosting role. They really couldn't find anyone to stand in for Zhang Ye. That fellow is simply too unique in the field of hosting. This is probably what I find most regrettable about Sing! After all, that image of him reading those advertising messages of a few hundred words in a single breath left a very deep impression on everyone. I don't think that most people can accept it now that that has changed."

"Yes, that's true. Hai."

"I find it weird that the guest coaches will no longer be turning around in their chairs too."

"Sing! isn't the same as The Voice after all."

The cameras started and the recording officially began.

As everyone discussed the show while recording happened, Zhang Ye's name kept coming up. It wasn't that they insisted on

bringing him up, but that his name was just unavoidable whenever The Voice was mentioned. It was like an eternal monument.

...

Meanwhile.

At Beijing Television.

Recording for I Am a Singer also began. In fact, their filming for the show had started ten days earlier. As the show consisted of reality TV elements, they had to follow the singers around with cameras, as well as document the behind-the-scenes activities at the television station and the program team's planning. For example, it was depicted in the program team's meeting how they invited the singers to the show and how the competition's rules were drawn up. Then there was also the assignment of tasks to Dong Shanshan and the others during a meeting between the seven host-managers. All of it was completed earlier and would be edited into the final broadcast cut to inform the audience about the rules so they would be fully familiar with how the show worked and understand the course of the competition.

And today was the official live studio recording of the show.

The staff members were standing by in their positions between 4 and 5 AM. Those who had worked with Zhang Ye before knew very well that he was usually very nice to others and an easy-going person who rolled with the punches. But when it came to work, Director Zhang was extremely demanding and paid very close attention to the details of a show. This was why no one dared to be careless with their roles.

The walkie-talkie beside Zhang Ye crackled.

"Director Zhang, Director Zhang, Singer #1 has arrived."

"OK. Follow them and document the arrival in video. Ensure that everyone sticks to the route."

"Director Zhang, Singer #3 is almost at the station."

"Get Singer #3's car go around again and wait for ten minutes."

"Understood, we won't let the singers bump into each other."

"How's the prep work going at the studio?"

"Everything is A-OK here!"

"Check again that the equipment is all set to go."

"Roger."

"In half an hour's time, let the audience into the studio."

"Copy that, Director Zhang."

The singers gradually arrived, albeit separately, in order to keep things confidential. This wasn't just a formality that they were preaching as the singers were really clueless about who the other participants were. Whether it was the contract talks, the rehearsals before the competition, or arriving at the station, all of it was carried out in isolation of the others. It was only when the singers got onstage that the other singers would know who they were through a television in their waiting rooms. This was done to increase the entertainment of the show.

Backstage.

This area had been redesigned into a very welcoming two story activity zone. On the second floor were seven rooms, with the logo of I Am a Singer and a room number pasted on the door. There was no indication of the singers' information, and only Zhang Ye knew which singer was going to be behind each door.

Room #1 was Xiaodong, the group leader of Spring Garden.

Zhang Ye pushed the door open and stepped in. "Hey, Sister Dong."

Xiaodong was just looking around the room when he came in. "Director Zhang, there are cameras everywhere in here?"

"That's right." Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Are you feeling OK?"

Xiaodong forced a smile. "I'm a little nervous."

Zhang Ye said, "But you're an Asian star. What big occasions have you not seen before?"

Xiaodong said, "I've never been in a competition with so many peers before! Tell me, who else joined? Hurry up and reveal a little to me. I walked around earlier, but why didn't I see anyone in the other rooms?"

Zhang Ye chuckled and said, "You're the first to arrive and also the first who'll find out who the other singers are. I Am a Singer will be using the competing singers as show hosts as per what we have discussed beforehand. So unless you get eliminated, you'll keep hosting until the finals begin, OK? But of course, with your ability and popularity, even if anyone gets eliminated, it won't be you. The other singers aren't as good at singing as you and less popular as well, so you can perform without any worries. Just let yourself go." He had said this before to Xiaodong. Otherwise, she couldn't have possibly agreed to join the show so easily.

Letting Xiaodong host the show was something Zhang Ye had given some thought. Whether it was her image, popularity, or eloquence, Xiaodong was the most suitable candidate for this role.

Xiaodong felt a little more at ease. "That's good then. I'm just afraid of losing. That'd be really embarrassing."

Zhang Ye handed her the hosting cue cards. "Here's the information about the singers. The host lines are also in there. Look through it and don't go outside the room anymore. The other singers will be arriving very soon."

"Don't worry." Xiaodong giggled as she took the cards from him.

After she did that, Zhang Ye turned around and closed the door. Then he quickly walked away.

But before he was even gone for five seconds, Xiaodong let out an angry roar from inside Room #1. "Zhang Ye! Get back in here!"

What's with this list of singers?"

In the activity zone, a few cameramen looked at Zhang Ye.

Xiao Lu blinked in confusion, not understanding what had happened to Xiaodong. She even gave Zhang Ye a look to indicate to him to get back in there to find out what was going on.

But no one expected Zhang Ye to not even turn around. When he heard that angry roar, this fellow even picked up his pace and walked away like he did not hear a thing!

In Room #1.

Xiaodong was so shocked she nearly fainted!

Seeing all of those names on the list of singers!

Chen Guang!

Amy!

Zhang Xia!

Xue Kaiqi!

He Huan!

Zhao Wuliu!

Xiaodong felt like she had just died!

What were all of these famous singers in the music scene doing here?!

Translator's Thoughts

Chapter 1229: How did I fall for your nonsense!

In the morning.

At the venue of I Am a Singer.

After the 1,000 audience members were admitted into the studio, they got so excited that they couldn't stay seated.

"What time does it start?"

"I heard that there won't be a professional host for this?"

"Zhang Ye's not hosting?"

"It seems like he won't participate in the competition nor host the show."

"Really? Then what'll he be doing?"

"I think he's just the executive director. Who knows what he's thinking?"

"This is his show, so he'll figure out a way to appear onscreen. Just wait and see. I know this guy too well. He'll definitely have given himself a good role."

"What about the judging panel?"

"It doesn't seem like there's one either."

"Huh? Are they going to base it off our voting?"

"That's right. I think it's because they didn't want a judging panel to sway the audience's decision, so they decided to do away with it."

"No host, no judging panel, no interactions, just seven singers competing onstage? The professionalism and authenticity of this show are clearly much greater. It'll also be a stern test of the singers' skills. However good they are, it'll be shown as is."

Everything is going to be as real as it gets without any sensationalism mixed in!"

"That's what will make it exciting!"

"I'm just worried that there won't be any good singers participating."

"Yep, that's what I'm worried about too."

"At least they could wear a mask on King of Masked Singers. Even if they lost, they could still choose not to reveal their identities. But there's no such thing on I Am a Singer, so will the big names really join? If you win? That would be expected! But if you lose? Then that would be too embarrassing. They might even suffer a drop in their popularity as a result. The risks are huge, so who would willingly come and participate? Even the appearance fees shouldn't be able to move them too easily, right? But then again, if the singers who join the show are only newcomers or little-known singers, it would be too boring. In that case, I'd rather watch Sing!"

"Yeah."

"Let's see how it goes."

Who would show up?

Which singers would be participating?

The audience was completely clueless and couldn't help but whisper among themselves.

All of a sudden, the lights dimmed.

The audience was startled for a moment before breaking into a round of enthusiastic applause.

Counting down to the start of recording.

Three.

Two.

One.

The entire studio fell quiet.

Everyone stuck their necks out in the direction of the moon gate at the back of the stage.

Meanwhile, the other singers and the team of host-managers led by Dong Shanshan were also watching this via the televisions in their rooms.

A female host of Beijing Television asked, "Who'll be the first singer?"

A young male host said, "I don't know, who's come?"

Some of them looked at Dong Shanshan. "Shanshan?"

Dong Shanshan shrugged. "Don't look at me, I don't know a thing either."

They really didn't know anything. As the host-managers to the singers, they did not take part in the pre-production of the show. There were also cameras pointed at them inside the room as there would be a segment later where they would fight to "sign" the participants. They really had a big role to play in this show. This footage would be included later by Zhang Ye in the final broadcast cut.

In Room #3.

Zhang Xia was sucking on a throat lozenge.

The staff members were doing her makeup.

In Room #4.

Xue Kaiqi said to herself, "Who could they be? Why can't I see anyone yet?"

In Room #5.

Chen Guang was watching in curiosity with wide eyes.

In Room #7.

Zhao Wuliu sat down like an old hand and hummed with crossed

legs. "The first person to make an appearance will have tons of stress. I wish them luck."

Every participating singer was extremely concerned with who their fellow competitors were.

Of course, the live studio audience felt this way as well. Some of them stood up impatiently, wishing they had binoculars to see what was happening onstage.

Suddenly, the lights shined!

A figure appeared in the moon gate.

"Someone's coming out!"

"Who is it? Who?"

"Dammit, I can't see anything!"

"The backlight's too strong!"

"It looks like a woman?"

"It's a female singer?"

"She seems a little petite!"

"She's stepping out!"

"She came out!"

One step.

Two steps.

Three steps.

When she walked out into the light, the crowd screamed!

"Ah!"

"My God!"

"It's Xiaodong!"

"It's Sister Dong!"

"Ahhh! My Sister Dong!"

Applause thundered!

The audience was exhilarated to see her and found it a little unbelievable that she was here at all. They thought there wouldn't be any big names participating in this show and that those who joined would all be newcomers. But who could have expected that the first singer to make an appearance onstage would turn out to be an Asian star? She was the leader of the Asian idol girl group, Spring Garden's Xiaodong!

Backstage.

Zhang Xia was taken aback. "Xiaodong?"

Amy already knew that Xiaodong was participating, but she didn't know that she would be appearing first!

Chen Guang was eagerly rubbing his hands. "This is going to be interesting."

Xue Kaiqi said in surprise, "Xiaodong is here too?"

He Huan said, "It's her?"

Zhao Wuliu's eyes narrowed.

The host-managers' room blew up!

A female host shrieked, "I'm a fan of Sister Dong!"

A male host said, "Oh, they've really upped the ante!"

"Xiaodong has actually joined the show! How can that be!" another female host said in disbelief.

"She's so successful, why would she come and join this competition?"

"I want to become Xiaodong's manager!"

"Get lost! Sister Dong is mine!"

"Hahaha, let's see who ends up being able to sign her!"

"The rules mentioned that if the singer gets eliminated, their

managers will get eliminated along with them. Xiaodong is for sure a safe choice! Anyone else might get eliminated, but she'll surely be able to stay on!"

The host-managers were starting to get their own ideas.

Onstage, Xiaodong bowed slightly to the audience before turning to the music director, Bai Yuanfei, and giving him a nod to signal that she was ready. Then she took a deep breath.

The music played.

The more attentive audience members were surprised. They realized the audio setup of I Am a Singer seemed even better than the King of Masked Singers' setup. What was going on? Did they upgrade the equipment again?

Unbeknownst to them, Zhang Ye had to withstand a lot of pressure as he negotiated with the upper management of Beijing Television for a very long time before they finally approved of his extremely high budget equipment for the show. The audio setup and other related equipment used on King of Masked Singers were the highest-end equipment available to the industry at the time. But Zhang Ye had sought to get all of them upgraded again. Even when compared to other countries' music shows, the equipment used here was definitely the very best there was. In this area, Zhang Ye had spared no expense. The extra funds in the production budget they had compared to Sing! were all spent on this! It was obvious from this just how persistent and determined Zhang Ye was in his work. He would either not do it, or do it to the very best by producing the most professional show in the industry!

It was a familiar melody.

Eh?

This song?

It was "Woman Flower"!

The audience was very surprised to hear it. A lot of people had

never heard Xiaodong perform solo before, much less cover a song!

All eyes in the studio fell on her. Then, Xiaodong closed her eyes, perhaps to steady her nerves or something. Thereafter, she kept her eyes closed for the entire time.

The melody played on.

Xiaodong raised her microphone.

"I have a flower.

"It grows within my heart.

"A bud waiting to bloom for the longest time.

"Every moment,

"waiting for a sincere person

"to come to me in my sleep."

Just a few lines were enough to enchant everyone in the studio!

Chen Guang praised, "That was great!"

He Huan sighed, "You'd know that she's a great singer the moment she opens her mouth."

Xue Kaiqi was getting even more nervous now. "She sang with such heart."

But the greatest reactions came from the live audience. The impression they had of Spring Garden was that they were an idol group. They felt that their success was only due to their pretty faces and the youthful songs they sang as a group! Singing skills? Talent? Nobody had ever paid that much attention to them until several months ago when one of their members, Li Xiaoxian, had donned the mask of Sunset Glow to take part in King of Masked Singers and shocked everyone with her singing. It was then that the audience first realized that the group wasn't only about looks. Even when performing alone, they could still sing great. Xiaodong's singing today had proven that once again. A lot of

people were mesmerized as they listened. They had never seen Xiaodong perform like this before. With her singing skill, perhaps even Li Xiaoxian would sound average next to her?

It was no wonder that Xiaodong was the leader of their group!

"Woman Flower, swaying in the red dust.

"Woman Flower, wavering softly in the wind.

"Only hoping for a pair of gentle hands.

"To sooth the solitude in my heart."

Woman Flower.

That's right.

This song reminded them of something they did not wish to remember. Everyone always had a misconception whenever they saw how youthful Xiaodong looked. Xiaodong hadn't changed much all this time, and Spring Garden was still that youthful and energetic Spring Garden they had always known. But the fact was that Xiaodong had debuted many years ago. This woman who had been skipping and dancing around on stage for the past ten years had been through a lot. She was no longer that young. In terms of seniority, Xiaodong might even have entered the industry earlier than Fan Wenli and Chen Guang.

The music ended.

The audience stood up and clapped!

Sighs!

Laments!

Reminiscence!

Enjoyment!

All kinds of emotions were stirred!

"Xiaodong!"

"Xiaodong!"

"Xiaodong!"

Countless people were shouting her name!

Xiaodong finally opened her eyes and bowed once more to the audience. "Phew, thank you."

The applause went on for a very long time.

Chen Guang was clapping from backstage as well.

Zhang Xia and Zhao Wuliu couldn't help but applaud her too!

But to everyone's surprise, Xiaodong did not leave the stage after her song. She looked into the audience and said, "Hello, everyone. I am a singer—and my name is Xiaodong."

Applause rang out again!

There was even whistling!

Then Xiaodong flicked her hand and made a stack of cards appear out of nowhere. When she saw the confused looks on many of the audience members' faces, she smiled and said, "At the same time, I'm also the part-time host for the first season of I Am a Singer. For here on out in the competition, I'll be taking over as the host. Please treat me kindly."

"Wow!"

"Xiaodong will be hosting?"

"Hahahaha!"

"That's really new!"

"Beautifully played! I've had enough of watching Zhang Ye host!"

The audience responded enthusiastically!

He Huan said, "So that's how it is!"

Chen Guang laughed, "Haha."

Xiaodong's first cue card was already clenched in her hand. She

looked down at it and read aloud, "First off, we'd like to thank the leading brand of health supplements, the Brain Gold Company, for being the title sponsors of our show. Thank you to Hubei Pharmaceuticals..."

A bunch of advertising messages were recited amateurishly. She even stuttered as she read her lines. But the audience was highly receptive as they laughed along endlessly. This was how tolerant the audience was of an amateur. If it were Zhang Ye standing onstage, if he even breathed while reciting the advertising messages, the audience would have scolded him for sure, let alone stuttering. This was because Zhang Ye was a professional host while Xiaodong wasn't. She was only standing in for the role as a guest, so no one really thought much of her mistakes. In fact, they found this to be really fun.

"Phew, I've finally completed that task," Xiaodong said.

The audience laughed, "Hahahaha."

Xiaodong smiled and said, "You guys don't know how nervous I just was. I debuted so many years ago and have been singing for so long, but I've never felt the way I felt today. Because this isn't your usual show, nor is it a concert, and it's definitely not a karaoke box. This is the battleground we'll fight our peers. The singers will compete to get ranked over two weeks of competition, and the last place singer will be replaced by another singer. Frankly, that just means that they'll be eliminated from the show! As for who decides whether we stay or go, it'll be none other than you, the 1,000 lovely audience members we have in the studio. Each of your votes will decide whether the singers will stay on the show or leave. So please be very, very, very careful about who you vote for."

Elimination?

Yes, it was that cruel!

They were all singers, so who could afford to lose?

Xiaodong seemed to sense the audience's doubts, so she said, "Some of you might ask me, why did you come to take part in the show if that's what the rules are? Isn't this as good as digging a hole for yourself to fall into?"

Right!

Why did you come?

The audience was very curious.

Xiaodong nodded. "Then I'll reveal the reason to you guys right now. I agreed to come on the show because Zhang Ye called me one day." She imitated Zhang Ye's voice. "He said, 'Come quickly, I have a good show that I want you to take part in.' But I told him, 'I don't want to go, I'm not confident about taking part in such competitions.' Then he said to me, 'It'll be fine, the other singers are not your equal. Their popularity and singing skills are not as good as yours. If you join, you'll definitely dominate the stage.' When I heard that, I immediately agreed, 'I'll join! I'll join your show!'"

Everyone was laughing away.

Xiaodong waved the cards in her hands and went on, "Then, around half an hour ago, when I received the list of singers and looked through it, I wanted to say this to Director Zhang—" Xiaodong roared, "Director Zhang! Show yourself! How did I fall for your nonsense!"

Chen Guang chuckled, "Pfft!"

Zhang Xia belly laughed!

Zhang Ye, who was coordinating the recording in the wings, let out a hollow laugh just as the cameras swiveled to him.

The audience erupted with laughter!

"Hahahaha!"

"Xiaodong was scammed!"

"Aiyo, I'm dying of laughter!"

"Zhang Ye is such a trickster!"

"Sister Dong! How could you believe Zhang Ye's words in the first place?"

"Hahahahaha!"

But at the same time, everyone was insanely curious!

If Xiaodong was the first singer, who would appear after her? What kinds of people were the other six singers? Who could they be to cause Xiaodong to get so "flustered" and "scold" Director Zhang for it?

Chapter 1230: The seven starting singers are revealed!

Who else was there?

The audience would find out very soon!

When the second singer came out through the moon gate, the entire studio audience stared with eyes wide. They were so surprised that their jaws nearly dropped to the floor!

"Oh my God!"

"Holy shit!"

"Who did I just see?"

"Zhao Wuliu!"

"It's Zhao Wuliu!"

"He's such a godly singer!"

"Aiyo, it's really him!"

"What a surprise! This gave me such a shock!"

The music played and Zhao Wuliu started singing.

The moment he opened his mouth, many of the audience members felt like they had been transported back 20 years!

Zhao Wuliu: A singer from the earliest batch of pop music singers in the Chinese music industry. He could be considered to be from the same generation of singers as Grandma Zhang Xia. In the field of artistic singing, Zhang Xia was definitely one of the top few performing artists. But back then in the field of pop music, Zhao Wuliu was one of the leading figures who had been extremely popular all over the country. He was a definitive A-lister of his era. Now that times had changed, with the entertainment industry's pace picking up, the number of A-list celebrities had grown much faster than 20-30 years ago when there were only a handful of

them. At that time, Zhao Wuliu was at the forefront of the A-listers, and anyone who was slightly older would definitely know of him. He was one of the earliest pop music idols in China. But at some point in time, Zhao Wuliu stopped appearing on everyone's televisions. There were also no updates about him for a very long time. After all, he was already in his forties or fifties, and the times had changed. There were rumors that he had bid farewell to the music scene, and some media outlets even claimed that he had taken seriously ill.

It blew up backstage as well!

Zhang Xia said in surprise, "Whoa, it's an old friend!"

He Huan exclaimed, "This is a truly godly singer!"

Chen Guang stared wide-eyed. "Senior Zhao?"

Xue Kaiqi was also quite shocked. "Teacher Zhao is making a comeback?"

Amy yelled, "Can the program team be any more resourceful? They could even get Senior Zhao to step out from retirement! What's there still left to compete for? I grew up listening to Senior Zhao's songs!"

The host-managers' room exploded again!

"I'll choose Teacher Zhao!"

"Step aside, Teacher Zhao is mine!"

"I'm telling you, don't any of you try to steal him from me!"

"Little Yan, didn't you just say that you wanted to be Sister Dong's manager?"

"I've changed my mind, alright!"

"Let's not fight over this. Whoever can convince the singers to choose them will get them!"

"Let's listen to the performance first. He's singing so well!"

"He still sounds exactly the same as years ago!"

...

In the wings.

The third singer was preparing to come out!

The audience's expectations were raised to the highest point!

"Even Zhao Wuliu has joined. Who else will there be?"

"The next person is coming out!"

"I can't see who it is! Who is it?"

"Looks to be around 1.7 meters tall? A man?"

"Eh, that silhouette looks really familiar!"

Finally, that person walked out through the moon gate!

The audience let out another incredulous exclamation!

"Old Chen!"

"Chen Guang!"

The big brother of the music industry!"

"What the heck! What's with this level of awesomeness!"

"Even Chen Guang has come!"

"What kind of lineup are we going to see? I'm already dazed!"

"Did they have to go this far?"

Zhang Xia shook her head and gave a wry smile. "I did guess that Little Chen would come to support Zhang Ye's show. Little Chen is going to be difficult to handle. I've heard him sing live for so many years and he hasn't once made a mistake. When we're talking about singing skills and experience, as well as being able to perform well in a live setting, there aren't too many singers who can stand up to Little Chen."

Xue Kaiqi put her head in her hands. "This is over, it's another

godly singer!"

Chen Guang started singing. The moment he opened his mouth, he sang a high note that made everyone's hair stand on end!

Chen Guang was not a relic of the past nor a retired singer. He was one of the hottest singers and a supporting pillar of the music industry. To say that he was the "Music Industry's Big Brother" might be a little controversial since everyone's evaluation and standards were different. But if it was said that Chen Guang was one of the top three male singers in the music industry, no one would raise any objections. Be it his popularity, singing skills, experience, or qualifications, Chen Guang would definitely be hailed as one of the most outstanding singers. Even his wife, Fan Wenli, was not comparable to him.

...

Then came the fourth singer's turn to take the stage.

"Amy!"

"Wow!"

"It's my Amy!"

"Two members from Spring Garden joined the show!"

"Pfft! Amy and Xiaodong must've both have been scammed by Zhang Ye to join his show! Looking at this lineup, I think Amy is done for! Will she get eliminated?"

"Get lost, Amy's singing is very good!"

"Listen, it's really quite good!"

"I've never seen Amy perform solo before. Her singing is really nice!"

Amy's performance style was more of the bubbly type. Her voice was less recognizable than Xiaodong's, and her singing was also lacking when compared to Li Xiaoxian's, but she was very good at bringing up the atmosphere. She especially knew how to use the

music to interact with the audience by choosing a song that was more exciting. In just a short time, she was able to excite the audience. There was even a rap portion in the song she performed so well that Xiaodong and Li Xiaoxian probably couldn't outdo her. Her rapping was definitely her most powerful weapon of all!

...

The fifth singer came out.

"He Huan!"

"Aiyo, it's Old He!"

"It's the Prince of Love Songs!"

"The best love song singer-songwriter in the country!"

"Didn't he just release an album last month? I heard it sold like crazy!"

"The love songs he writes are all quite nice! And his singing is great too!"

"In the genre of love songs, He Huan will sweep away all competition! Even Chen Guang is no match for him, right?"

"Yeah, because Old Chen hardly ever sings love songs!"

"What are all these godly people doing here!"

"Who else has come?"

"My heart can't take this anymore!"

...

The sixth singer made her appearance!

"Xue Kaiqi?"

"Am I seeing this correctly?"

"It's her!"

"The Princess of Love Songs, Xue Kaiqi?"

"Princess Xue was so popular at one point! She was at the same level as Fan Wenli! After she got married and gave birth, she left the industry!"

"I'm not really familiar with her."

"You don't even know Xue Kaiqi? Five years ago, she could release an album and it would get at least 30 million plays on the Internet! It's just that her popularity has dropped since she hasn't been releasing any new songs."

Both the Prince and Princess of Love Songs are here?"

"How exciting!"

"Listen, does it sound like her voice isn't in the right condition?"

"She's probably just nervous."

"I think it's pretty good, it sounds pure to me!"

"'Time' was the song that shot her to fame. I won't get sick of it no matter how many times I listen to it!"

...

Only one was left!

Who could the seventh singer for the final performance be?

The answer was soon revealed!

Zhang Xia came out from behind the moon gate with a smile on her face. Everyone knew who she was. As a constant presence on the annual Spring Festival Gala on Central TV, she had also been appearing on television variety shows recently because of Zhang Ye. Based on her relationship with him, it shouldn't have been surprising for her to come onto I Am a Singer. But to the contrary, the audience was even more surprised to see her than the other singers when she appeared in front of them!

Grandma Zhang was taking part in the competition?

How could she possibly face off against the others?

She wasn't even a pop singer! Rather, she was a songstress who sang bel canto! She was someone who took the artistic route at a higher level of performing arts. She had also won so many art awards that it would fill an entire wall cabinet. Be it her songs or her singing, she was a singer who could easily perform at the Great Hall of the People or any other world-class theater. If the competition was assessed through artistry, then there wouldn't be a need to compete. The other six singers on this stage couldn't beat Zhang Xia even with their combined strength. But since the judging criteria was going to be based on mainstream pop music, surely Zhang Xia couldn't match up to them, right?

But very quickly, they learned they were wrong to think that way!

The moment Zhang Xia raised her microphone, everyone was astonished and astounded!

"These days, seasons fly by,

"flowers bloom aplenty.

"Winds wander, clouds float by,

"nature shut behind the door.

"To be plucked uneasily,

"I slowly realize.

"Bloomed already, but no one coming is completely expected."

It was Zhang Ye's "Wild Rose"!

This version that Zhang Xia sang was not bel canto. Instead, she sang in mezzo-soprano. And from the way that it was sung, it was definitely a technique used for pop singing!

It sounded so good!

So good that it shocked everyone!

Backstage.

The singers who had finished performing were all gathered inside a waiting room.

Amy's jaw dropped!

Zhao Wuliu was a little startled!

Chen Guang sighed in admiration!

Xue Kaiqi was gasping for air!

He Huan was even funnier as he bowed in respect of Zhang Xia's performance!

The audience was also very surprised. This was the most shocking performance that many of them had heard today. It was only when this famed songstress of thirty years dropped down a level to sing pop music that they realized how shockingly good she was at singing!

Screams!

Applause!

And there was even crying!

Compared to Zhang Ye's version of "Wild Rose," Zhang Xia's version was less angry. She sang more reserved, with a greater subtleness and more sadness.

At this point, all seven singers had finished performing!

"It's time to vote!"

"Who are you going to vote for?"

"It's too hard to choose!"

"Yeah, all of them sang really well. Fuck!"

"I'm utterly convinced today! I have no way to describe the shock that I'm feeling!"

"These are what you call pro singers!"

"What do you mean pro singers? These people are more fucking

professional than the professionals! Just bringing any of them on would be enough to scare everyone!"

"I'll vote for Zhang Xia!"

"Me too, I'll vote for Zhang Xia as well. There's no two ways about it!"

"I still think Old Chen sang better!"

"I'll give my vote to Zhao Wuliu. Oh, those feels!"

"I think Sister Dong and Grandma Zhang Xia are the ones who surprised me the most!"

The audience was still immersed within the seven songs, unable to snap out of it for a very long time!

It was exhilarating!

It sounded really amazing!

It was way too extravagant!

So this was Zhang Ye's new show?

The biggest stage with the highest-end equipment, with the best variety show director, the big brother of the music industry of twenty years ago, the big brother of the current music industry, the top love song singer-songwriters, the country's leading girl group members, and one of the top three artistic singers in the country!

What kind of a lineup was this?

This was a lineup that could sweep the entire "world"!

Compared to King of Masked Singers, which became popular beyond imagination, even that show would not have come close to what they had seen here!

The audience did not know what the final tallies were as the votes would be counted by the program team separately. Just as everyone was leaving Beijing Television wishing that the show

hadn't ended so quickly, they suddenly remembered Sing!, which was being recorded at the same time at Central TV Department 1. Since they couldn't attend that recording, they didn't know how Sing! was doing. But they could finally understand why Zhang Ye dared to pit I Am a Singer against Sing! by choosing to broadcast on the same day and time as them. They couldn't help but start questioning, what if Central TV Department 1 found out what sort of show I Am a Singer was. If they knew that I Am a Singer had invited this group of singers, would they still dare to broadcast Sing! at the same time as I Am a Singer?

The answer to this was unknown.

The outcome of that would only be revealed after the broadcast.

Chapter 1231: Where'd that rapidfire host go?

The audience left.

The votes were being counted.

The singers went back into their respective rooms.

And at this moment, the hosts' battle to sign the singers began. When Executive Producer Hu Fei announced the start of this segment, the hosts yelled and rushed out of the room like sprinters. He squeezed past him, she pushed her, she tripped him over, everyone was trying to run out except for Dong Shanshan. She just walked behind them with a smile on her face.

"Who pushed me!"

"Stand aside!"

"Grandma Zhang is mine!"

"Damn, someone even tripped me?"

"Hey, you guys are too devious!"

"Behave, people! Watch how you're acting, my comrades. We're recording a show here!"

These several hosts were not the big names of Beijing Television who hosted the Spring Festival Gala on their satellite channel. Instead, they were the younger bunch of hosts who were lesser known to most viewers. This was specifically requested by Zhang Ye, as Dong Shanshan alone was enough to hold the group together. The others would then focus on "entertaining" with their antics and could behave without any restraints. That was why the younger and less popular hosts were more suited for these roles. This segment might look like it didn't add any value to the show and was carried out without proper planning, but it was in fact carefully planned out by Zhang Ye with the dozen odd host-

managers over many meetings before the actual recording took place. He knew exactly how this segment would proceed, which was what his role was all about. The importance of the executive director could easily be seen here! This was also why Hu Fei and Beijing Television had desperately wanted Zhang Ye to be the executive director back when they were filming King of Masked Singers. When it came to ability, experience, results, and attitude, there wasn't any other variety show director in the industry who could match Zhang Ye's professionalism.

The host-managers were playfully laughing and fighting as they rushed into the singers' waiting rooms that were not labeled. When a male host who ran the fastest pushed open one of the doors, he let out a surprised squeal and quickly entered, wanting to close the door. But two female hosts rushed up to the door behind him and quickly pulled at the door to stop him from closing it.

One of the female hosts asked, "Who's inside?"

The male host shouted, "There's no one in here!"

"Who are you trying to fool! Open the door!" the other female host said with a laugh.

Behind them, the other hosts also rushed over to help pull open the door!

"Ah!"

"Grandma Zhang!"

"It's Grandma Zhang!"

Inside the room, Zhang Xia laughed as she looked at them. She was really amused. "What are you all doing?"

In the end, all of the host-managers managed to get in and were each holding a contract in their hands.

The male host who got into the room first ran over and knelt down in front of Zhang Xia. "Grandma Zhang, I'll introduce myself

first. My name is Big Lei, But you can call me Little Lei too. From now on, I shall be your manager on the stage of I Am a Singer!"

Zhang Xia smiled. "Hello."

"What do you mean by 'from now on'?"

"Step aside, Big Lei!"

"Grandma Zhang, please sign with me!"

"Didn't you say that you wanted to be Teacher Zhao Wuliu's manager?"

"I've changed my mind, alright!"

"Grandma Zhang, ignore her. Sign with me instead! She's two-faced!"

Another female host was even more aggressive. She went and hugged Zhang Xia. "Grandma! My dearest grandma!"

Zhang Xia reacted in surprise. "Wow, you're even recognizing me as kin?"

Zhang Xia was the most wanted singer right now. After she sang "Wild Rose," Zhang Xia turned into the host-managers' favorite singer to sign as it would mean they wouldn't have any worries of getting eliminated!

At this moment, Dong Shanshan came into the room.

"Sister Shan, don't you steal her away from us!"

"Shanshan, it's too crowded in here! Don't come in!"

Zhang Xia smiled and said, "You want to sign me as well?"

Dong Shanshan smiled and said, "Yes, Grandma Zhang."

Zhang Xia was spoiled for choice. She said, "This is going to be difficult. Who should I sign with? I can only choose one of you."

"Sign with me!"

"Me! Me! Me!"

"My dearest grandma!"

Everyone rushed forward and started selling themselves.

In the end, Dong Shanshan only needed to say a few words to defeat everyone else. She tucked her hair behind her ear and said, "Grandma Zhang, they've all introduced themselves, so it's my turn. My name is Dong Shanshan, and I'm a college classmate of our I Am a Singer's Executive Director Zhang Ye. Back at school, we sat in front of and behind each other. He copied my assignments and stole my eraser too, so you should understand that I'm the one who has the best relationship with the program team leader among these people. In the future, if you have any requests or needs, you can notify me directly. Everything will be OK and I'll get it done for you."

Zhang Xia pointed at her the moment she heard that. "It's you then, Shanshan! Let's sign the contract!"

Dong Shanshan gave a triumphant smile.

The other host-managers nearly fainted!

"You can do that?"

"Sister Shan, that was so shameless!"

"What the hell!"

"I have to give you that introduction!"

Since Zhang Xia signed with Dong Shanshan, they had to switch their targets. The group dispersed amid the hubbub to go fight for their second-choice singer!

...

Half an hour later.

The seven singers and their host-managers were taken to a small recording studio by the program team staff. There were 14 chairs and some recording equipment in there.

The singers got seated.

The host-managers were up to their usual antics again.

Dong Shanshan laughed and said, "Has everyone been paired with their favorite singers?"

The host-managers all said things like "yeah," "yup," and "that's right."

Dong Shanshan's tone changed as she smirked. "How can that be? How could it be that fortuitous!"

Everyone burst out laughing!

Chen Guang, Xiaodong, and the others were also tickled!

"I suppose this is where they're going to announce the results, right?"

"Phew, I'm getting a little nervous."

"Grandma Zhang, you're feeling nervous?"

"Your singing really convinced me."

"Old Zhao, we haven't met each other in a long time, have we?"

"That's right, Big Sis Zhang."

"Nice to meet you, Teacher Zhao Wuliu. I'm a fan."

"You're Amy, right? It's our first time meeting today."

"Yup, yup, I was still a little kid when you were famous."

"And I listen to Spring Garden's songs very often. They're really good."

Everyone began chatting. This was their way of easing the tension that had built up. All of these big names here today, which were not famous or have not been popular before? What big occasions had they not seen? Yet for some reason, even an old hand like Zhao Wuliu and national bel canto songstress Zhang Xia got sweaty palms. It was because this wasn't a performance. To

them, this wasn't simply a variety show either. It was a competition with winners and losers, a place they could be eliminated from. The results of their performances today were very important. If they didn't do well in this qualifier, then they might just get eliminated in the knockout round. No one hoped it would happen to them, so they were anxious and nervous and held expectations for the results that they would get.

All of a sudden, they heard footsteps.

Zhang Ye's figure finally appeared in front of them. He was dressed in formal attire and walked in at a very slow pace. He had a very serious look on his face as he said, "Hello, everyone. I am the executive director, Zhang Ye."

The atmosphere had an imposing air to it.

"Director Zhang."

"Are the results out yet?"

"Please announce them."

"Huu, I'm sweating!"

"Me too!"

The host-managers were chattering.

Zhang Ye stood still and said calmly, "First off, thank you to the staff from the Beijing Notary Public Office for supervising the entire counting of votes. The results of the count have been inputted into this 8-inch tablet that I'm holding that's running on the latest multi-core technology." Pausing, he picked up a bottle beside him as the camera zoomed in on him. "Before I announce the results, let me take a sip of this Honey Sweet fruit juice to soothe my throat." After he sampled it, he said, "Mmm, that was delicious. Actually, I'm more nervous than any of you. That's why I still have to drink this Brain Gold, the leading health supplement brand in the country, to improve my state of mind." A crew member next to him handed him an item. Zhang Ye opened the

packaging and said in surprise, "Oh, there's even a gold bar in here? So it's true that there's a chance of winning a gold bar from this new gift box packaging of Brain Gold products?"

Everyone burst out laughing!

Xiaodong said, "Director Zhang is such a professional!"

Zhang Xia said, "Was that an ad?"

A female host-manager said, "That definitely wasn't an ad!"

Another host-manager said, "That's right, there was no hint of any advertising!"

"Yeah, totally no hints!" Another male host-manager laughed as he glanced over.

No hints? Your sister!

That was too fucking laden with advertising messages!

A lot of viewers had become very sensitive and negative towards product placement in shows. But that was still dependent on who was doing it. Zhang Ye's methods had always been different from others'. This fellow could come up with all kinds of creative ways to bring in an advertisement and even use it to make everyone laugh. This was also the reason why even though I Am a Singer's advertisement sponsorship fees were very expensive, many companies were willing to work with them. Zhang Ye's professionalism was well-known in the industry. As long as he had the chance to do it, Zhang Ye would flash an advertisement onscreen. This was unlike the other television stations and other media where they were always covering up their advertising motives for fear that the viewers would realize it.

Zhang Ye said, "Next up is the announcement of the rankings. But before that, I'd like to ask everyone what you all think about this competition?"

Zhao Wuliu smiled and said, "Everyone here are experts."

Zhang Xia said, "The audio setup is pretty good."

Xiaodong said, "I just feel that there's too much pressure."

He Huan gave a wry smile. "If I'd known earlier who the other six were, I don't think I would've agreed to join."

Amy said, "Teacher He, I should be the one saying that, alright!"

Zhang Ye smiled. "First of all, let me thank all of you for coming on behalf of the program team. All of you have been famous singers for a long time, so by being willing to take a step down to join I Am a Singer's knockout competition, I know how difficult of a choice that was to make. But you still came anyway, which is why I want to thank all of you. Of course, since this is a competition, then there must be a ranking. Honestly," he glanced at the tablet in his hand and continued, "when I saw this ranking, I was a little surprised. So, for the first one, I would like to announce the fourth place singer."

Surprised?

Why was he surprised?

The singers and their managers' hearts pounded from the suspense!

Who would be in fourth place?

This was a very conservative spot that signified an alright performance and was acceptable.

Zhang Ye looked at the tablet. "In the first episode of the first season of Brain Gold's I Am a Singer, the singer in fourth place is..." He paused.

Everyone was staring in wait with wide eyes.

One second.

Five seconds.

Ten seconds.

Nothing fucking happened!

"Director Zhang?"

"Did you fall asleep?"

"Why aren't you announcing the results?"

"Aiyo, I'm dying from the anxiety!"

The host-managers could not bear it!

Zhang Ye apologized, "Sorry about that, I got distracted. I was thinking about how much that gold bar I found in the Brain Gold gift box would fetch on the market. Could you excuse me while I go and sell it off?" He then went to turn around to leave.

Xiaodong was stunned. "Hey, where are you going?"

Amy was dumbfounded. "Director Zhang, who's going to announce the rankings if you leave now?"

Dong Shanshan giggled, "Pfft!"

Zhang Xia was tickled as well. "Director, please hurry up."

Zhang Ye smacked his lips. "Well, alright then. I guess I'll announce the rankings first. The singer in fourth place is..." After another long pause, he said, "Xiaodong—"

Xiaodong was just about to react.

But Zhang Ye said in an unhurried tone, "What place do you think you're in?"

What the!

It's not me?

Everyone was crying out from the torture!

"Director Zhang!"

"Come on!"

"Can you announce it once and for all?"

"Ahhhh!"

The cameras had been recording for 15 minutes by now!

But as it stood? Zhang Ye was still rambling and not a single spot had been announced!

Everyone nearly vomited blood!

Zhang Ye had once shocked everyone on the stage of The Voice by speaking like a machine gun. Everyone in the industry was so amazed by him that they claimed there wouldn't be a second person in the field of hosting who could speak as fast as him in the entire world!

But now?

What the hell is this?

Where'd that rapidfire host go?

Aren't you being too damn long-winded?!

Chapter 1232: The exciting premiere!

On the day of the broadcast.

Since early in the morning, rumors were running wild over the Internet.

"Sing! is pretty good!"

"Yeah, I was at the live recording. It was really good!"

"Well, I thought it was just so-so."

"It's a continuation from where The Voice left off, but there isn't anything new. The host has changed, and the guest coaches are different too. I can only say that it was not bad, but there isn't really anything surprising about it."

"I think Sing! is going to end up in a tragedy!"

"Why do you say that?"

"Because I Am a Singer has invited a bunch of people that none of you can imagine. I was there on the day of the recording. Everyone was totally shocked!"

"Ah?"

"Who was there?"

"Yeah, tell us quickly!"

"I'll just reveal one, Zhao Wuliu!"

"That's impossible!"

"Haha, keep bullshitting!"

"You went overboard with your bullshitting, didn't you?"

"Zhao Wuliu is such a godly person in the music industry, how could he have possibly joined a variety show?"

"Damn, Zhao Wuliu was really there. There was also Chen Guang and He Huan too!"

"Chen Guang? The big brother of the music industry going on a program to face off against other singers? You're really too imaginative! With Old Chen's status and ability, he's more suitable as a coach. He would never strip away all pretense and go into battle! You must also be dreaming to claim that He Huan was there. He's the Prince of Love Songs, someone who can write and sing. He's so popular in the music industry; do you think he's gone mad? To go onto the show and battle his peers? Does he even need to do that? Those who join the show are gonna be either has-beens or newcomers! That's why you should be careful if you want to brag. Don't say things that others will find unbelievable if you really want to brag."

"They're just making things up. I went to the recording and Huo Dongfang was there on the show!"

"Ah? Has Sect Leader Huo crossed industries?"

"Old Huo's singing is not bad, so there's a good chance that he could've joined the show."

"Li Xiaoxian was also there."

"Surely not, right?"

"Didn't she just participate on King of Masked Singers?"

"She was really there and she sang very well!"

"Wow, that might really be true. After all, Li Xiaoxian has worked with Beijing TV before."

"Zhang Xia was part of the lineup."

"Get lost! Why would Grandma Zhang face off against a bunch of pop singers? Are you an idiot or do you think I'm an idiot?"

"Fuck, you're the idiot!"

"I'm so annoyed by these people who weren't even there at the recording trying to mislead people here!"

"I+++...\$&%\$###%...#@!!"

There was no official confirmation from Beijing Television either. Zhang Ye and the program team staff also stayed silent. Sometimes, maintaining a veil of secrecy would invite a greater fanfare. However, the 1,000 audience members who attended the live recording couldn't be stopped from revealing this information. Someone would definitely expose something about the show. But Zhang Ye and the program team didn't bother stopping them, although they stopped short of confirming anything themselves and just let everyone say what they wanted to say. As a result, the waters became even murkier!

The names of Zhang Xia, Zhao Wuliu, Chen Guang, He Huan, Xiaodong, and the others were all mentioned. Simultaneously, many other names were brought up, like Huo Dongfang, Li Xiaoxian, Sun Han, Liao Yiqi, Sun Xiaoguo, etc. Those who revealed these names even said they had attended the live recording and were seated in the first row, claiming that they had seen those artists singing onstage with their very own eyes. So things got more chaotic as the industry insiders became utterly confused by the claims made by those Weibo accounts that had jumped on the bandwagon or were just trolling for fun.

Who was there?

Just who had gone onto the show?

...

On the set at a film location.

Huo Dongfang's cell phone rang.

"Old Huo, good on you!"

"Ah? What?"

"Stop pretending, remember to do your best! The viewership ratings on Zhang Ye's show won't do too badly for sure."

"What are you talking about, Old Liu?"

"Didn't you participate in I Am a Singer?"

"What? But I didn't?"

"Huh?"

"I'm filming a movie!"

...

Central TV Department 1.

Sing!'s program team.

A summary of the news going around on Weibo had been reported back to them.

"Sect Leader Huo has joined their show?"

"That's OK. Huo Dongfang's singing skill is only average. At most he would be considered an outsider crossing industries to guest star on the show. Although he's very popular, he isn't a professional singer!"

"Hur hur, Zhang Ye has also sunk to a low."

"Yeah, he's also starting to use big names to attract now."

"But what use is that? Our platform of Sing! is much more professional than theirs. When the audience sees it, they'll know whose participants can sing better. The talents are still among the common folk. Just look at those contestants we had lined up for the first episode. Their singing is all so good that even most pro singers aren't a match for them. With that to compare with, so what if they have Huo Dongfang? So what if they have Sun Xiaoguo? Singing show still have to depend on singing!"

"Li Xiaoxian has joined Beijing TV's show again?"

"No worries. Li Xiaoxian's singing might be good, but she ain't among the best. We have Teacher Fan Wenli holding the fort for Sing!"

"But what about Zhao Wuliu?"

"And Chen Guang? He Huan?"

"Oh, come on! Those are definitely just rumors."

"Yup, I Am a Singer would never be able to invite them!"

"Hur hur, and there's even talk of Zhang Xia participating too. Those who believe that must have brains of mush, hahaha. Anyone with a brain knows that that's made up! Just hearing that list mentioned by those people which consist of Zhang Xia, Chen Guang, He Huan, Zhao Wuliu, Xue Kaiqi, and Xiaodong, you would immediately know that it's fake! The people on that list would constitute half of the music industry's big names. If they're really on the show, then which show wouldn't be swept aside? Would the others still need to continue broadcasting? That's why it's impossible!"

"Right!"

..

On that night.

It was the countdown to the broadcast.

Zhang Ye was at the studio with the television on. The staff had all gathered together here, and his parents had come as well. They made a lot of dumplings in the afternoon and insisted on making something for Zhang Ye's staff to show their appreciation, so they followed Zhang Ye to the office in the evening. There were two steaming pots in the open kitchen as the dumplings cooked inside the bubbling water.

"Come, come, let's eat!" Zhang Ye's mother brought out a plate of steaming hot dumplings.

His father added, "Eat up. We've prepared pork and leek dumplings, as well as three delicacies 1 ones.

Ha Qiqi went over to take the plate from her. "Thank you, Auntie and Uncle."

Little Wang said, "Auntie, let me do it!"

Zhang Zuo said, "Ah, this is so delicious!"

Wu Yi said, "This makes me think of the dumplings that my mother used to make for me."

Tong Fu exaggerated, "This is so good that I'm gonna cry!"

Zhang Ye's mother said, "Then have more. We still have enough to fill several more pots."

Zhang Ye ate as he said, "Hey, it's starting soon. Change the channel to Central TV Department 1."

"OK." Little Wang picked up the remote control right away.

But his mother stared at him. "What are you watching Central TV Department 1 for? Watch Beijing TV instead."

Zhang Ye didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "I have to study my competition to know how they're doing. I oversaw the recording of I Am a Singer and edited it as well. I've already watched the first episode more than seven times!"

"But I haven't seen it yet!" His mother rolled her eyes.

In fact, the studio staff had not watched it either. They were on Zhang Ye's private team and did not take part in the production of the show, so of course they hoped to watch I Am a Singer at the first possible chance. In the end, Zhang Ye had to glumly take his plate of dumplings and head to the conference room. He sat there by himself with the television on as he ate while he watched. The rest remained outside and waited for I Am a Singer to begin. They were joined a little later by Chenchen, who had come upstairs to scrounge on the dumplings.

The broadcast began!

Zhang Ye watched Sing! and started roasting the show.

"Whoa, they even copied the logo?"

"Heh, the sound isn't that great! They're still using the same set of equipment that I was using back then? It's already been a year; that equipment is outdated. How can they be so thick-skinned and continue using it?"

"What's with the host? There's nothing about her that stands out."

"The first contestant doesn't seem like much!"

"Man! The fight between the guest coaches isn't intense enough!"

"Ai, childish! The director is simply too childish!"

Behind the closed doors of the conference room, he talked to himself about everything. Zhang Ye tore Sing! to pieces. In any case, this fellow didn't have a single good thing to say about it and despised everything he saw. But in all fairness, this show wasn't even badly done. It was still pretty good. Although they copied Zhang Ye's version of The Voice entirely, they managed to reproduce it quite faithfully to the first season of the show. All they were missing were some bright sparks of creativity.

At this time, his parents' exclamations came from outside!

"Xiaodong!"

"It's Xiaodong!"

Not long after.

"Heavens!"

"Zhao Wuliu!"

"He...he really went?"

...

Central TV Department 1.

Sing!'s program team was also dumbfounded!

"Huh?"

"What the heck is this?"

"Who can tell me what just happened?"

"They....How did they..."

"Impossible! This is impossible!"

"How on earth did Zhang Ye do it?"

"How could he possibly have invited those people!"

...

Meanwhile.

It blew up on Weibo!

"Holy fuck!"

"Quick, go and watch I Am a Singer!"

"Xiaodong really joined the show!"

"Zhao Wuliu has too!"

"Next up is Chen Guang!"

"They've gone mad! These people must've gone mad!"

"What those people claimed was really true!"

"My titanium dog eyes are blinded!"

"How eargasmic!"

"Listening to this made me cry!"

"The sound quality is way too good!"

"This sound quality really can't be reproduced by any other show!"

"The singing is so good! This lineup should account for half the music industry's big names, right?"

"They sang so well that I'm finding it hard to believe this is true!"

"Sing! is gonna be screwed! Compared to I Am a Singer, don't the

contestants on Sing! all seem like children coming out to play?"

"Ah! Zhang Xia is the final singer!"

"Fuck! She sang 'Wild Rose' to such a godlike level!"

"An artist! This is what you fucking call an artist!"

"In the face of Grandma Zhang, even Zhang Ye's version of 'Wild Rose' can't compare!"

"I have a feeling that I Am a Singer is going to blow up!"

"The idea behind I Am a Singer and its format are simply too good!"

"The pressure is now on Sing!"

"That might not necessarily be true. Sing! has an existing audience base, so it's hard to say how its viewership ratings will do."

"Based on the quality of the show, I Am a Singer has defied the Heavens! Just by getting those seven people onto the same stage, which of their competitors would not be swept away?"

"They're about to announce the rankings!"

"Damn! What is Zhang Ye doing!"

"This cheat!"

"Zhang Ye, fuck your grandpa!"

"I wish I could snuff him out by sitting on him!"

"Why is he still not announcing the results?"

"My God! The total time needed for the seven singers to perform only took twenty-something minutes. But your announcement of the results have used up another twenty minutes of the time, and only two singers' spots have been announced so far?"

"Zhang Ye! You're dead meat!"

"Pfft, this is so funny!"

"What fastest talking host in the history of TV? He's should be called the most long-winded executive director in the fucking history of TV instead! Zhang Ye, do you believe I won't smash your home's windows?"

"Ahhh, this suspense is killing me!"

"Who on earth is in first place?"

"Zhang Ye! You've pissed off the entire audience!"

The audience was shouting in anger and hating this. But even amid all the scolding, no one changed the channel. In fact, they were all watching with anticipation and excitement as they waited for Zhang Ye to finish his teasing. Even though they knew he was doing this on purpose, everyone still continued watching because this was the most crucial moment in the show!

When the fifth contestant of Sing! made their appearance, I Am a Singer was still on the ranking announcement segment. When Sing!'s seventh contestant came out, I Am a Singer was still announcing the rankings. By the time Sing!'s broadcast had ended, I Am a Singer...was still announcing the rankings!

Just think about that!

What kind of a goddamn bloody situation was this!

All of the viewers wanted to smash a brick into Zhang Ye's face through their television screens!

After finally making it through all the "hardship," the rankings for the first episode of I Am a Singer were finally out!

First: Zhang Xia.

Second: Chen Guang.

Third: Zhao Wuliu.

Fourth: Xiaodong.

Fifth: He Huan.

Sixth: Xue Kaiqi.

Seventh: Amy.

The tally was not shown to maintain a certain level of suspense. It would only be announced during the next episode after the knockout round took place.

Chapter 1233: A viewership rating that would terrify anyone!

The next day.

Early in the morning.

On the roads, in the subway, at the breakfast stalls, heated discussions were happening.

"Did you watch it yesterday?"

"I watched both shows!"

"Me too. I caught Sing! first. But after that, I switched over to I Am a Singer."

"Hahaha, the rankings announcement segment was such a scam. That Zhang Ye could probably get away with murder by killing us with all that suspense. He really stole the thunder last night. A singing show ended up with him getting even more screen time than the singers who performed onstage. I was wondering why Zhang Ye didn't participate in the show himself, so that's where the Easter egg was. But then, this show is really good, haha! I just loved how he teased those singers and their host-managers!"

"This segment is ingenious. I don't think other shows would even dare to attempt it!"

"Yeah, the creativity of this show is really on another level."

"Sing! was pretty good too."

"It was, but that show was also created by Zhang Ye. No matter how well Central TV Department 1 does it now, they're still feeding on the scraps that were left over by Zhang Ye."

"True that."

At the same time.

Dozens of morning newspapers went on sale.

"Sing! puts up a good performance."

"Central TV Department 1 continues its work on a classic!"

"I Am a Singer causes a sensation!"

"A great half of the music industry's big names are in attendance!"

"Zhang Ye's new variety show is as amazing as ever!"

"I Am a Singer: A shocking work of art!"

"The gap in the audio sensory experience was obvious. I Am a Singer has a world-class audio setup!"

"Zhao Wuliu makes a comeback. The once popular God of Songs has been revived!"

"Songstress Zhang Xia shoots to fame overnight with a career rebirth!"

"Amy on the verge of elimination?"

"Xiaodong's solo performance showcases her incredible singing!"

"Viewer survey: Chen Guang and Zhang Xia favorites to be grand champion!"

"Zhang Ye's ample screen time makes audience laugh and curse!"

"Zhang Ye's new nickname: The most long-winded executive director in the history of TV!"

"Zhang Ye's popularity to climb again?"

"Whose viewership ratings will be higher, Sing! or I Am a Singer?"

...

Beijing Television.

At I Am a Singer's program team office.

Everyone was here today. Executive Producer Hu Fei had asked Xiao Lu to buy some newspapers that reported about their show to

the office. But when Xiao Lu arrived at work, she was carrying more than 20 morning newspapers in her arms. She had probably bought a copy of every paper at the newspaper stand because they were all reporting about their show.

Furthermore, the songs sung on the show had also charted on the biggest music chart in the country!

On the latest Top Chinese Music Chart.

The calculation of yesterday's statistics: #1: "Wild Rose" - Zhang Xia

#2: "Don't Say You Know Me" - Zhao Wuliu #3: "Hope" - Yan Yi

#4: "Fire" - Zhang Yuanqi

#5: "Protect" - Chen Guang

Many of the songs performed on I Am a Singer had appeared on this chart. Of course, there were also the songs performed on Sing!, like the #3 song on the chart, as well as others like the Heavenly Queen's song that was just released a week ago and another new song from a Heavenly King. These were the top 20 songs for the day based on the statistics calculated yesterday.

Hou Ge said excitedly, "We've made it!"

Hou Di cautiously reminded, "We still have to see how the viewership did."

"Even without seeing that, I know that we've made it!" Hou Ge said, "I was worried that the segment where Director Zhang announced the rankings had dragged on for too long. During the broadcast yesterday, I even timed it on my watch to see exactly how long it took. Well alright, the announcement went on for nearly 30 minutes! Hahaha, but who could have expected that the viewers would be so accepting of it. The draft report even showed that the viewers doubled at that point in time!"

Xiao Lu giggled loudly. "I was also worried about that. But in the

end, I was proven wrong by Director Zhang!"

Dafei said happily, "That's right, when has our Director Zhang ever gotten it wrong before?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Hey, hey, enough with the adulation."

Han Qi said in admiration, "Teacher Zhang is so amazing."

Hu Fei smiled and said, "It's not like you guys haven't witnessed the amazingness of Teacher Little Zhang before. I'm not at all surprised that the show got a good reception, but what I'm more concerned about now is the viewership ratings for our premiere episode. This is different from King of Masked Singers because we didn't have any competition back then and dominated the market. But with Sing! sharing the same broadcast slot with us, the viewers would definitely be divided. That makes it really difficult to put a finger on how we'll do."

Yes.

The viewership ratings were the most important factor!

It was also the area in which they and the whole of Beijing Television were most concerned about!

Chen Guang called over.

"Zhang'er, what's the viewership ratings?"

"Don't be so anxious, Old Chen. It's not out yet."

"When will it be released?"

"I'll let you know."

A short while later, Dong Shanshan and the other host-managers arrived at the office. The first thing that every one of them asked about was the viewership ratings.

Zhang Ye was also starting to feel the pressure. He had depended on his reputation and influence to form his team. After spending

over the 200 million RMB that Beijing Television had allocated for the production budget and taking another 200 million from Wu Mo for the title sponsorship fee, he rounded up Dong Shanshan and the other hosts of Beijing Television, invited Zhang Xia, Chen Guang, Zhao Wuliu, Xiaodong, and the others, as well as carried out the task that his studio had prepared for him to reach the summit. If he messed up on the viewership ratings, he wouldn't be able to answer to anyone.

...

Central TV Department 1.

Sing!'s program team staff had also arrived at work very early. Both anxiety and anticipation were written on everyone's faces as they waited for the viewership ratings to be released.

"Is it out yet?"

"Hurry up already!"

"May the Heavens bless us!"

"We don't ask to break 2% for the premiere, but please, just let us do better than I Am a Singer!"

"Right, it's good enough if we can do better than them!"

"It will definitely be higher than their viewership ratings. A show that only spends half its time showing singing performances and the other half showing some long-winded ranking announcement, its viewership ratings couldn't possibly be high at all!"

"We'll definitely win this time!"

"Zhang Ye's legend of the viewership ratings will be broken soon!"

Everyone in the industry knew about the legend of Zhang Ye.

He had never lost before!

He was always first in the viewership ratings for similar shows!

He was always first in the viewership ratings for the same broadcast slot!

He was always the first in the viewership ratings of the entire country!

Even for the documentary he filmed, it had swept aside all of the other television shows in the country. This was why so many people in the industry were waiting to see who could cut short Zhang Ye's legend in the viewership ratings. Without a doubt, Central TV Department 1's Sing! had the best chance to do so, even if Sing! was originally Zhang Ye's idea to begin with.

On Weibo.

"I place my bets on Sing! winning!"

"Get lost, my bet is on I Am a Singer!"

"For Zhang Ye's shows, it can lose in other areas, but it will never lose in the viewership ratings!"

"The only one who can curb Zhang Ye is the SARFT. Now that the SARFT has turned their attention away from him, that means that no one in the entire industry can win against that guy, not even Central TV Department 1!"

" +1 to the previous poster!"

"Brilliant analysis by the previous poster!"

"If Zhang Ye had made the second season of The Voice, he might stand a chance of beating I Am a Singer. But with Central TV Department 1's Sing! being just a renamed version of The Voice and having no new content, it'll be really difficult to beat him!"

"Anything can happen, let's see how it turns out."

"The two shows are quite good, so I don't think the viewership ratings will differ by much."

Finally, at 10 AM, the nationwide viewership ratings for yesterday were released!

But the results dumbfounded many industry insiders and netizens. A lot of people could feel their hearts turn cold and a chill rise from within!

How could that be possible!

How could it be like this!

Th-This didn't make any sense!

The netizens were shocked!

The industry insiders were terrified!

Many people were unable to accept the results!

The rankings of the nationwide viewership ratings for yesterday:
First: I Am a Singer, with a viewership rating of 2.43%!

Second: Celebrity Guess, with a viewership rating of 0.84%!

Third: Sing!, with a viewership rating of 0.82%!

The entire industry blew up over this news. I Am a Singer was first in the nationwide viewership ratings? Alright, that was still acceptable. After all, this was Zhang Ye's show. After all, he was the best director in the industry! But what was this about Sing!? How could Sing!'s viewership ratings only put it in third place? It didn't even pass 1%? It only managed a meek 0.82%? It wasn't even a match for a reality TV show like Celebrity Guess?

Didn't the reviews say that it was quite good?

Didn't they say that it was very good?

So why were the viewership ratings so low?!

Many people in the industry were terrified. What was that nonsense about the viewers and popularity of these two shows getting split and shared evenly? It turned out there was no such thing! I Am a Singer had snatched away most of Sing!'s viewers! During yesterday's broadcast slot, I Am a Singer's viewers were three times as many as Sing!'s! What was there still left to play for?

What was there still left to compete on?

Had Zhang Ye's influence reached a tipping point?

That whoever went up against him would be left for dead?

Whoever went up against him would be finished?

Sing! couldn't do it?

Central TV Department 1 couldn't do it?

Was there really no one in the industry who could defeat him?

This question was finally answered today.

That's right. It seemed there was really no one at all!

Chapter 1234: The people of Central TV Department 1 are made to cry!

At Beijing Television.

It was pure jubilation in the program team office!

Even the staff from the other program teams came over to congratulate them. Everyone was looking at Zhang Ye with a strange compelling sense of admiration!

Xiao Lu screamed, "We've won! We've won!"

Hou Ge put his arm around Dafei's shoulder. "It's 2.43%!"

Hou Di shouted, "That's so awesome, Big Bro!"

Hou Ge said, "Yeah it is, Little Bro!"

Dong Shanshan waved a thumbs up at Zhang Ye.

Everyone followed suit and gave Zhang Ye a thumbs up.

"Director Zhang!"

"You're awesome!"

"You're the best!"

"Central TV Department 1 has lost badly this time!"

"They didn't even pass 1%!"

"We must have snatched away all of their viewers!"

"I will only respect Director Zhang in this lifetime!"

"I could never have freaking expected this outcome!"

"Ahhh, this is great!"

"Producer Hu, Director Zhang, looks like treat's on you two this afternoon!"

"Haha, that's for sure. Let's have a celebratory feast later!"

Hu Fei was also feeling very excited. All of his worries and anxiety disappeared the moment the viewership ratings chart was released. Thinking back on their own analysis about having no audience base and the issue of the show's popularity getting divided, it was laughable now! They had Zhang Ye on their side! What did they have to worry about!

Zhang Ye was already making some calls.

He gave Chen Guang a call first.

"Hello, Old Chen."

"Is it out yet?"

"It's out. 2.43%, we're in first place."

"What? It passed the two-point mark? How much did Sing! get?"

"0.8-something."

"Ah?"

"Don't blame me for that, tell Old Fan not to come looking for me."

Then he called Xiaodong.

"Sister Dong, the viewership ratings are out."

"Boss Zhang! I saw it! I saw it already!"

"Alright then, that's all. I just wanted to tell you."

"Do you have to tell anyone? The entire entertainment circle has already blown up over the results! Everyone in the industry is talking about you. They're saying that you're the undisputed leader of variety shows. Not even a Heavenly King or Queen could beat you in this field. Haha, thank you so much, Boss Zhang. Because of your show, this girl has grown in popularity again. I only just got off the phone with Grandma Zhang Xia. She says that she didn't expect her song to get so popular. She wanted to give you her support for the show at first, but who could've guessed she would

benefit from you instead. Grandma Zhang is already preparing her second song. She's really motivated for the show!"

"You should also prepare yourself."

"That's for sure, I'm going to vie for the top three!"

Next, he called Amy.

"Amy, do well on your second song."

"Aiya, I'm so stressed out!"

"Haha."

"The show has gotten so popular, so I can't get eliminated just like this. I won't talk anymore, Director Zhang. I have to start choosing my song to prepare for the performance. This time, I'm gonna give it my all!"

Every singer was getting really motivated. In a basic sense, weren't they participating on this show just because of popularity? With the viewership ratings doing so well, everyone would get very excited!

Zhang Ye's Studio also found out about this news instantly.

Zhang Ye called Ha Qiqi. "Everything's proceeding according to plan. Let everyone know so that they don't have to worry."

Ha Qiqi laughed and said, "I knew that there wouldn't be any problems!"

For the "Reach the Summit" plan to succeed, it was necessary for this step to proceed smoothly. From the viewership ratings of the premiere episode, as long as Zhang Ye didn't make a mistake in the production of the show from here on out, the viewership ratings would only get higher and wouldn't suffer a drop. Further, Zhang Ye's screen time on *I Am a Singer* was unexpectedly large and the amount of attention he received was as much as the singers themselves. As such, the popularity he could gain from the field of television shows would surely be maxed out now!

As Zhang Ye continued making several more calls.

The Beijing Television executives arrived at the program team office. It was usually Hu Fei who welcomed them since Zhang Ye wasn't good at dealing with higher-ups. The moment the executives came into the office, they simply made a promise to the entire team that their year-end bonuses would be tripled! This was the most practical reward that anyone could receive, so they applauded it loudly!

...

Online.

The netizens were also exclaiming in surprise.

"I really didn't expect this!"

"Yeah, the disparity is too great!"

"How the hell are they going to compete like this?"

"I Am a Singer is too awesome!"

"It's another phenomenal variety show! The premiere has done so well even with Sing! as its competitor. If they could knock Sing! out later, the viewership ratings could even break records again! King of Masked Singers won't be able to hold its viewership ratings record!"

"Sing! isn't that bad, I actually found it quite good. But the problem for them is that they had go against Zhang Ye, so it's quite unlucky that they had to lose this way. Judging from the show trending online, their viewership ratings should definitely be able to pass 1% at the minimum. But because of I Am a Singer broadcasting at the same time slot, all of the viewers were taken away from them. Those viewers would then catch the rerun of Sing! on television or over the Internet. This statistic does not take that into consideration for the viewership ratings; that's why the disparity is so large."

"How terrible."

"I really sympathize with Central TV Department 1."

"How did it turn out like this?"

"My God! How scary!"

"Yeah, which shows would dare to take on Zhang Ye during the same time slot in the future! Even Sing! has died a bloody death!"

"Central TV Department 1 have only themselves to blame for being so arrogant. They were hyping up their show using Zhang Ye's name and even deliberately said incriminating things about him. Using someone else's work and still stabbing him in the back was what caused Lord Zhang to get so enraged. So he created a new show and took them on in response. Otherwise, Sing! would definitely have dominated the market without any competition. Hai, it's happened so many times, so why won't they just learn. Why do they keep thinking that Face-smacking Zhang is so easy to be trifled with?"

"I Am a Singer was indeed wonderfully made!"

"They invited all the right people!"

"Zhang Xia's song was spectacular!"

"Zhao Wuliu gave us such a surprise!"

There was a flurry of discussions!

Zhang Xia was on fire!

Zhao Wuliu was on fire!

Xiaodong was on fire!

Zhang Ye was on fire!

Dong Shanshan and the other host-managers were on fire!

Everyone that was related to I Am a Singer had become really popular with the rise of the show!

...

Meanwhile.

Central TV Department 1.

There was an eerie silence in the program team office of Sing!

How could this be!

How could it happen!

Was there a mistake somewhere?

Could the result have been miscalculated?

How could their show's viewership rating be so low?

A young woman who was holding the viewership ratings chart in her hands suddenly puckered her lips as she started tearing up uncontrollably. When another woman on the program team beside her saw that, her eyes reddened as well.

Terrible!

They had lost too terribly!

An assistant director saw it and immediately said, "What's with this? Huh? What's with this? How far are we into this? Don't start panicking so soon. The viewers only watched their premiere episode for the fun of it to see what it was all about. They've never heard of a show like I Am a Singer before, so they went to have a look for themselves. By the next episode, our audience will have returned and the viewership ratings will surpass theirs. So if we work hard on the second episode's recording, we'll definitely be able to beat them!"

Another assistant director added, "Right! I Am a Singer has a major flaw in their format, which is how they eliminate the participants too quickly. Those singers are all big names in the music industry and have many fans. Whoever gets eliminated will surely cause a stir within their fanbase. They'll definitely be unsatisfied with the results and protest it. At that time, their

viewership ratings will definitely fall, so don't worry too much!"

Really?

Could that be possible?

Only then did everyone regain a glimmer of hope!

Right!

They hadn't lost yet!

It was only the first episode!

There was still plenty of time!

There were still a lot of chances!

They just had to buck up and do their jobs seriously so the show would get better. Only then could they really compete against Zhang Ye's team. This was just like a soccer match. The winner wouldn't be decided until the final moments of the game. So all of them took a deep breath and encouraged themselves: Come on! There isn't much time left for Team China 1Uh, there isn't much time left for us!

Chapter 1235: The second episode of I Am a Singer!

On the second week.

It was only two days away from the broadcast of the second episode.

"I'm so looking forward to it!"

"Time is really dragging by, hurry up and broadcast it already!"

"I like Grandma Zhang Xia!"

"Sing!'s Little Huang is pretty good too!"

"Let's see if Sing! can catch up in the ratings this time."

"Yeah, if they can't do it by the second episode, then it's all over for them."

"I'm getting worried about I Am a Singer. Don't forget that the second episode will be the knockout round. All of those singers can sing so well, so I won't be able to accept whoever gets eliminated. But for now, doesn't it look like Amy will be the one who most likely gets eliminated? I wonder how many votes she has now. She was the last place singer during the first episode. In my opinion, this will be the only opportunity for Sing! to overtake them in the ratings. If I Am a Singer does not handle this issue well, their success will only be a flash in the pan."

"You can do it, Amy!"

The online discussions were unending.

Elsewhere.

Beijing Television.

The second episode's recording of I Am a Singer was about to begin.

The singers had gradually arrived throughout the afternoon and were rehearsing in solo practice sessions. Meanwhile, Executive Director Zhang Ye was not present onsite. Instead, he was in a room by himself making a call.

"Teacher, please come."

"Director Zhang, do allow me to think about it first."

"You don't need to think. Our stage is only missing a singer like you."

"But my songs are not suited for competing with others."

"There's nothing that's unsuitable. Our audience is a very inclusive bunch and will embrace all kinds of music."

"You're making this difficult for me, Director Zhang."

"Teacher, did you watch the first episode of our show?"

"Yes, I did."

"Grandma Zhang Xia has become very popular overnight, and the audience is very receptive to her performance, so that shows the inclusiveness of our show's stage. As long as it's something good, everyone will be interested in it. Of course, I know that you don't lack popularity, nor do you care about that. But if you can bring more people your art and let them appreciate it, that would also be a virtuous thing to do. Please don't hesitate any longer. This is my fourth time calling you and your agent, so I'm sure you know how sincere I am in inviting you."

"Well, alright then."

"Then it's settled, Teacher?"

"I'll give it a shot."

"Great, here's to working well together!"

After hanging up, Zhang Ye snapped his fingers!

It had taken an entire week, but he had finally worked it out.

This really had not been easy.

On the Internet, all the discussions were about the knockout round of I Am a Singer. The netizens were all worried that the program team would not be able to handle this segment properly and screw it up. But of course, anything that the viewers could think of would already have been anticipated by Zhang Ye. He knew in his heart of hearts that such eliminations would not really pose much of an issue. If there was one show doing this, then another two or three shows would follow suit. In the future, such elimination formats would definitely get mass adopted by every other show out there. The discussions and doubts would only serve to propel their show's popularity and viewership ratings; it would never decrease the popularity of the show. However, he would have to be very cautious about this knockout round and handle the process very carefully. That was the most important thing of all right now, and Zhang Ye's plan was to make use of the replacement singer option. He needed a very experienced and big name singer so that the viewers would not dwell on who got eliminated and instead turn their full attention to the replacement singer. It would surely help to cut down on the later negativity. As they say, ring out the old, ring in the new. This was exactly what it meant.

Once he came out of the room, Xiao Lu and the others looked to him.

"Director Zhang, how did it go?"

"Did he agree?"

Everyone was asking.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "It's done."

"Ah!"

"That's great!"

"Director Zhang is awesome!"

"You've got such great influence!"

Everyone could finally heave a sigh of relief knowing just how important this first replacement singer was.

But Zhang Ye laughed and said, "It's not because of my influence but that our show has gotten good viewership ratings. With this access pass, it was much easier to handle the negotiations."

Hu Fei came over. "Zhang'er, we're about to start recording."

"Alright, Brother Hu. I'll be right over." Zhang Ye started getting busy.

The atmosphere of today's recording was quite different from the first episode. Everyone from the program team was in great spirits. But whether that was due to the heaven defying viewership ratings or because of the management's promise that their year-end bonuses would be tripled, no one really knew.

The singers were also giving it their all. Amy and Xue Kaiqi, who were the two bottom place singers in the first episode, were going all out in hopes that they could avoid the "relegation" fight, so of course they had to give everything they had. They were no longer thinking about first and second place anymore. All they wanted was to be able to remain in the competition. Meanwhile, the better ranked singers from the first episode like Zhang Xia, Chen Guang, and Zhao Wuliu were all not too worried about getting eliminated. However, the pressure on them was just as great since they were hoping for a shot at first place.

...

Two days later.

The second episode was broadcast.

All over the country, countless viewers were watching TV and waiting in anticipation. Some of them chose to watch Beijing Television, while others had switched to Central TV Department 1. As for how many people were watching and what the ratio of viewers was between the two channels, no one really knew. They

would have to wait until the broadcast was over before the viewership ratings would get released.

In front of the television.

"It's starting!"

"They've picked the order of appearance already."

"Ah, Amy is so unlucky!"

"Pfft, Amy's host-manager is so funny! She got picked to sing first!"

"This is going to be dangerous."

"Xue Kaiqi didn't get a good lot either. She'll perform third?"

"Wow, Xiaodong is such a good friend!"

"Sister Dong picked number five but gave up her slot to Amy!"

"Even at such a crucial moment, they're still so sisterly!"

"Xiaodong's coming on to sing."

"Haha, Xiaodong's hosting is quite good. At first, I felt that Sister Dong was too unprofessional as the guest host. But ever since I saw how Zhang Ye did the rankings announcement at the end of the first episode, I suddenly found Sister Dong to be very professional! This is what it means to be a host, no nonsense, no long-windedness! She would outdo that fraudster Zhang Ye by at least ten blocks! I suggest that Sister Dong take on the role of announcing the rankings at the end as well. Zhang Ye, I've had enough of you! You're so full of deception!"

"Agreed!"

"Hahaha, seconded!"

Xiaodong.

He Huan.

Xue Kaiqi.

Everyone eventually had their turn on stage.

"Wow!"

"That was such a great performance!"

"Amy is in godly form today!"

"No one can even come close to her rap!"

"I still think Chen Guang was better. He's really got it in him and can perform so flawlessly every time! Actually, I felt that Chen Guang should have been first in the previous episode. It's probably just because he's a very popular singer at the moment that everyone has become too familiar with his singing. Since everyone knows that he can sing well, there's less to look forward to for his performances!"

"It's Grandma Zhang Xia's turn!"

"Oh my God!"

"Fuck!"

"The moment Grandma Zhang started singing, I knew that first place would go to her!"

"Grandma Zhang is the biggest dark horse on I Am a Singer!"

"Yeah, who would've thought that an old-fashioned songstress could actually sing such songs!"

The performance segment was over.

Very quickly, it was time for the rankings announcement again.

When Zhang Ye strolled up, then read the advertising messages at an unhurried pace, and leisurely chatted with everyone, the TV viewers started cursing and swearing again!

"Get lost!"

"Zhang Ye, your sister!"

"Why is it this again?"

"Pfft, I've got to give it to you!"

"Can't you just fucking announce the rankings!"

"Aiyo, I'm dying of anxiety!"

"Teacher Zhang, can you stop doing that please!"

"You crawling bastard!"

To crawl means to be very slow in the Beijing dialect.

After rambling on for almost half an hour, the rankings were finally squeezed out like how one would milk a cow.

The combined rankings over the two episodes were: First: Zhang Xia

Second: Chen Guang

Third: Zhao Wuliu

Fourth: Xiaodong

Fifth: He Huan

Sixth: Amy

Seventh: Xue Kaiqi

The Princess of Love Songs who was ranked last would have to leave this stage.

Amy's eyes reddened as she gave Xue Kaiqi a hug.

Zhang Xia gave Xue Kaiqi a pat on her back with a sigh.

Everyone came forward to bid farewell to Xue Kaiqi. It was a pretty emotional scene, but this was not done for the show's effect, nor was it scripted. After meeting several times and getting along so well, everyone had become familiar with each other. Moreover, many of them already knew each other before this and could be considered old friends, so they really could not bear to see her leave.

On the Internet, the netizens erupted!

"It's a conspiracy!"

"What a shady show!"

"My Princess!"

"How could they have eliminated Xue Kaiqi?"

"I like her so much!"

"This is so cruel. Xue Kaiqi indeed didn't sing very well during the first episode, but she's definitely capable of more than that. It's just that she hasn't returned to the stage for a very long time, so why didn't they give her a chance to prove herself?"

"Yeah!"

"Director Zhang is so cold-hearted!"

"Dammit, I'm not watching this anymore!"

"Fuck, surely you guys don't have to take it so personally, right?"

"I think the votes are a pretty accurate reflection of the audience's choice. Xue Kaiqi hasn't performed onstage for too long, so she didn't seem too comfortable standing there? So she got a little nervous? Hai, but I'll still miss her anyhow."

"I don't want her to go!"

At this moment, Zhang Ye spoke on the television.

After everyone had finished shedding their tears and saying those sad words, and when Xue Kaiqi finished her emotional crying, Zhang Ye suddenly said, "Oh, right. There's one more thing that I forgot to mention. Before the grand finals take place, we'll have a revival round. The previously eliminated singers will have the chance to return to the stage to battle to be the grand champion. Teacher Xue, are you willing to accept this invitation?"

Zhang Xia was stunned.

Amy was dumbfounded.

Xue Kaiqi said in surprise, "Of course I'll accept!"

Chen Guang was floored. "Director Zhang, why didn't you mention this earlier?"

Zhang Ye slowly took a sip of water and even purposely flashed the bottle's logo at the camera before answering, "No one asked."

Dong Shanshan laughed, "Pfft!"

All the host-managers were shocked!

On Weibo, everyone was exasperated!

"So there's going to be a revival round?"

"Zhang Ye, fuck your grandpa!"

"You're such a scammer!"

"Damn, you should have said so earlier!"

"Yeah, you made me cry over the elimination for nothing!"

"I have never come across such an unreliable executive director before! You should have mentioned those rules earlier!"

"Hahahahaha!"

Chapter 1236: I'll give in, alright?

The next day.

The viewership ratings were published!

The rankings of the nationwide viewership ratings for yesterday:
First: I Am a Singer, 2.77%

Second: Sing!, 0.91%

These top two ranked shows in the nationwide viewership ratings were not only the top two shows for the day and at the same time slot. They were as good as the top two ranked shows for the weekly and monthly nationwide viewership ratings! Sing!'s viewership ratings had increased by a little, but it wasn't really much to speak of. Meanwhile, I Am a Singer's viewership ratings rose by so much that it could be said to have taken a step up. It was only into its second week of broadcast, but the viewership ratings were galloping towards the 3% mark. Things were going strong for them!

Seeing this result, a lot of people reacted differently.

The industry sighed.

The media smacked their lips.

The public got into debates.

"Sing! is still not doing well!"

"I Am a Singer is too strong!"

"There's nothing that they can do about it."

"No one in the entertainment circle can curb Zhang Ye!"

"It really is a good show, so it was well-deserved that they got such a result. Sing! was just unlucky to be broadcasting at the same time slot as I Am a Singer. Otherwise, they shouldn't have any problems passing 1.5% in the viewership ratings. We can only see

how Central TV Department 1 will react now. Are they going to put up a relentless fight? That might just be possible. After all, the two sides are very caught up in battling each other, and they've got some history between them as well."

"Let's wait and see how they'll fight."

"There isn't much time left for Sing!"

...

Central TV Department 1.

At the Sing! program team office.

"Why is it still like this?"

"Why did it increase by so little?"

"We've lost again?"

"Goddammit, I can't accept this!"

"Come on, everyone!"

"Yeah, it's not over yet!"

"They've eliminated Xue Kaiqi, so their viewership ratings will definitely fall!"

"That's right, this is our chance!"

"Let's do our best for the third episode!"

...

A week later.

The third episode of I Am a Singer was broadcast.

The replacement singer was the final performer.

When the figure standing behind the moon gate appeared onstage, countless TV viewers were pleasantly surprised and whooped in disbelief!

"Ah!"

"This is?"

"Teacher Huang Cheng!"

"It's Teacher Huang!"

"Why is he here too?"

"Even he has come?"

"This lineup is making me piss my pants!"

"Did they have to go this far?"

"It's Huang Cheng! The famous musician!"

Huang Cheng and Zhang Xia were both considered artists even if they each had a different style. Zhang Xia was more of an artistic folk singer who sang bel canto while Huang Cheng belonged more to the global stage as an artistic singer. He was particularly good at jazz and the like and had won global music awards on more than one occasion. He had performed on some of the biggest stages in the world and was even nearly nominated for the most prestigious global music award. Of course, that last honor was something that only the Chinese media had publicized. As for how close he had gotten to being nominated, that was undetermined.

If the Chinese music scene had to identify someone who was closest to the global stage of music, then that person would definitely not be Zhang Yuanqi, Chen Guang, nor Zhang Xia. It would have to be Huang Cheng!

So for an artist like him to come onto the stage of I Am a Singer, the viewers were of course very surprised. It seemed even an artist like Huang Cheng could not resist the charm of performing on such a stage. This was the biggest musical stage in the entire country and a place where professional singers had gathered. And today, Huang Cheng was also here!

Amy said in a daze, "It's another heavyweight?"

He Huan said respectfully, "This is a singing master."

Zhang Xia smiled. "Another old friend has come."

With great effort.

Word by word.

Zhang Ye finally finished announcing the rankings with an effort that was akin to squeezing out the very last bit of toothpaste.

First: Huang Cheng

Second: Zhang Xia

Third: Chen Guang

Fourth: He Huan

Fifth: Amy

Sixth: Xiaodong

Seventh: Zhao Wuliu

Perhaps due to this being Huang Cheng's first appearance on the show and also the fact that he had sung quite well, he took first place with his stage debut. The audience was very respectful to him. Meanwhile, Xiaodong did not get ranked well because she had been picked to sing first and that might have affected her results. Actually, there weren't really any problems with her singing. Zhao Wuliu coming in last place was the most surprising of all. He had clearly done very well in the first two episodes and was also given a lot of attention by everyone, but who could've guessed that the votes for him would drop in the third episode. Perhaps it was due to the initial surprise of his appearance waning and the fading feelings that made the audience more rational and demanding of the singers' performances. This was a good thing, and it showed that the audience was becoming more and more professional with their voting. This was a singing competition, after all. The singers weren't here to compete on their popularity nor their seniority, and this was also an important point that *I Am a Singer* was targeting to achieve as the show went on.

The viewership ratings were released very soon this time.

First: I Am a Singer, 2.85%

Second: Sing!, 0.90%

I Am a Singer was still building up its popularity, but Sing!'s viewership ratings were flat and had even dipped slightly. It was obvious where this was going.

...

Elsewhere.

Central TV Department 1 could no longer just sit around!

Sing!'s program team staff were all starting to panic a little!

"What should we do?"

"This...this..."

"Director, our advertisers have some very strong words about this!"

"The title sponsor has already called us five times!"

"It doesn't make sense that our viewership ratings are so much lower than theirs!"

"There must be a mistake somewhere!"

The entire office was thrown into chaos!

From the director to the staff members, everyone was feeling very pressured. Of this outcome and these results, they simply could not give an explanation to anyone!

The executive director sat there silently with a dark look!

"Director!"

"Director, give us some ideas!"

"What are we to do now?"

"Director!"

Everyone looked over to the executive director.

He suddenly banged on the table and stood up. Then, under the startled gaze of the office, he turned around and exited the office to head straight to the management office of Central TV Department 1!

Zhang Ye?

I Am a Singer?

I'm scared!

I'm totally scared of you, alright?

I'll give in!

I'll give in to you, alright?

You guys are great! You guys are awesome! You're the best director in the variety show industry! I can't win against you people, alright! Even if I can't afford to offend you, do you think I can't choose to avoid you? I fucking admit defeat! I fucking don't want to play around with you guys anymore!

On the same day.

Central TV Department 1 made an announcement that shocked the entire country!

Due to technical issues, Sing!'s broadcast time would be changed to 9 PM on Sundays!

The industry burst into an uproar!

Technical issues?

Technical issues, my ass!

This was Sing!'s program team admitting defeat!

That wondrous Zhang Ye was really ruthless! He could even force Central TV Department 1 to change their show's broadcast time? When both sides were engaged in a heated battle, such decisions would almost never happen. This was because even if one of them

were to lose, they would still have to hold on and get through it. Who didn't want to keep their dignity? But obviously, Central TV Department 1 could no longer hold on. This was their most anticipated show of the year, which they had poured in large sums of money to make. Just the advertising contracts alone were worth over a 100 million RMB. If they continued fighting with Zhang Ye and Beijing Television like this, they wouldn't be able to bear the losses!

The netizens were dumbfounded!

"Ah?"

"They changed the broadcast time just like that?"

"Fuck! They're not going to fight each other anymore?"

"I could never have expected this!"

"Zhang Ye, that jinx! He's caused all this trouble for Central TV Department 1 again!"

"How painful are their faces?"

"But what else could they do? Even if it's painful, they have to take it!"

"Yeah, this is better than getting beaten hands down week after week, isn't it?"

"Central TV Department 1 has finally learned to be smarter this time!"

"They can't be blamed for that. Most people really can't win against Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye is on fire once again!"

"Without any more competition, I Am a Singer will skyrocket in popularity!"

"Yeah, even by broadcasting at the same time and period with the competition, they could still reach almost 3% in the viewership

ratings. Without Sing! in their way, what kind of viewership ratings will it get?"

An epic war in the variety world had come to an end just like that!

It had ended once again with the victory going to Face-smacking Zhang!

Chapter 1237: The fifth step of the 'Reach the Summit' plan!

Sunday.

Noon.

The aroma of cooked food filled the entire studio.

Everyone had gathered here today, including Zhang Ye.

"Director Zhang, let's eat."

"We ladies have cooked some food for everyone, so have a taste of our culinary skills."

"Director Zhang, are we allowed to drink today?"

"Feel free to!"

"But Director Zhang, should we really be drinking during working hours?"

"It's the weekend, so let's not be so uptight about the rules."

"Alright, I'll go get the beer then."

"Come, come, everyone, let's eat!"

"A toast to I Am a Singer for getting number one in the nationwide viewership ratings again!"

"We've already celebrated that last week. This time, we should be celebrating our defeat of Sing! After battling with Central TV Department 1 so many times, we've finally beat them into submission!"

"Right, let's toast to that!"

"Cheers!"

"Hahaha, let's drink!"

A celebratory feast was being held at the studio today. After

Central TV Department 1 announced the time change for Sing! yesterday, the fourth milestone in their "Reach the Summit" plan could be said to have been completed ahead of time. Without a strong competitor, and without Sing!'s presence to spoil the show by taking a share of their show's popularity, they were virtually unstoppable now. Honestly, the studio's staff felt terrified at the beginning. Everyone knew that doing a singing show wasn't the best choice to make at the time. Even if the viewership ratings were not bad, as long as there was Sing! to clash with, they would still lose out on quite a bit of the popularity, which would in turn affect the progression of their plan. But this outcome was undoubtedly for the best, and they probably had been more frightened than hurt by anything. The most important thing was that Zhang Ye's screen time on I Am a Singer had turned out to be much more than they had expected, and the segment was also getting a lot of attention from the viewers. Therefore, with a large amount of attention and popularity generated for the show, it corresponded into a transfer to Zhang Ye. This was their main objective for this milestone, and it was more important than anything else.

At midnight, the Chinese Celebrity Rankings Index was updated.

Chen Guang had been pushed to the forefront of the B-list.

The once-popular Zhao Wuliu had returned to the rankings and was now among those in the D-list.

He Huan's rank rose by six places.

Amy was moving further and further up the B-list.

Xiaodong was in a similar position to Chen Guang as they both closed in on the A-list.

Grandma Zhang Xia had the greatest increase in popularity among their entire group. Her jump in the rankings astounded everyone. In just the timespan of one night, Grandma Zhang got promoted into the B-list. Even though everyone knew Zhang Xia

because she was a familiar face to many people through her constant presence on the yearly Spring Festival Gala, she had always been considered just a C-or D-list celebrity due to various other reasons. The older generations all liked her a lot, but there weren't too many from the younger generation who were her fans. This was also the cause of Grandma Zhang's prior lukewarm popularity.

But with the aid of her performances on I Am a Singer, Zhang Xia's songs and singing had destroyed everyone's mindset of her. Together with the somewhat fashionable gray hair of hers, many of the younger people turned into a fan of the old lady. This was what contributed to Zhang Xia's overnight shot to fame. Of course, this explosion of popularity was also due to the accumulation of decades of hard work by Zhang Xia, as well as her image. With all these conditions coming together, it brought about her miraculous rise in the Celebrity Rankings Index. This wouldn't have been possible if it were any person other than her.

As for Zhang Ye?

His rank remained the same.

He had been sitting in first place on the A-list for a very long time.

Some people simply gave it a quick glance, then skipped right past his name. But if anyone observed more thoroughly, they would have clicked on Zhang Ye's name and discovered that his popularity score was no longer the same as it was when he first reached the top of the A-list. The increase was slightly more than twofold, and he had shaken off the other A-listers behind him. Meanwhile, the gap between him and the seven S-list celebrities was no longer as large as before! While the public and the media still hadn't realized it, Zhang Ye was quietly creeping up to those seven spots!

After lunch.

The studio's staff sat down together.

Zhang Ye asked, "How far are we?"

Ha Qiqi, who was holding a statistics report in her hand, said, "We've caught up by quite a bit, but we're also still lacking by quite a bit."

Zhang Zuo laughed and said, "Perhaps it's because those seven spots have not changed in too many years, so everyone's mindset is that no one up there will be replaced anytime soon. That's why the media did not pay any attention to it. We should take this opportunity to score an unexpected victory and take them all by surprise."

Wu Yi sniggered. "Yeah, they still haven't realized it."

Tong Fu said excitedly, "Are we going to implement the fifth step now?"

Ha Qiqi nodded. "Yes, I think it's time."

"Yeah, I agree." Zhang Zuo looked at the calendar and said, "Based on the time frame that we identified, we can probably go ahead and start now."

Ha Qiqi asked, "Director Zhang, is your show recording schedule going to be busy?"

Zhang Ye smiled. "It's not too bad since everything is already on track, so I could spare some time."

Ha Qiqi blinked. "Then you should be prepared to get a little busier from here."

Zhang Ye acknowledged, "Yeah, I was the one who called for the 'Reach the Summit' plan to be implemented. From that moment on, I knew that we wouldn't have much time to rest. So how could I not be prepared for it? Which brands have we identified as targets? Are there any that I'm familiar with? It would be easier to deal with those that we've worked with before. For those that we

haven't, it might be a little more troublesome to handle."

Ha Qiqi took out a document and handed it to Zhang Ye. "While you were working on the show, we got in touch with these companies. Of course, it's just preliminary contact for now. We still haven't had any in-depth discussions with them. As there are too many rumors going around about you, some of which are quite negative, we have to start a familiarization process with them. There are some brands who are very interested in working with you. But most of the major brands already have a fixed celebrity spokesperson, so it might not be easy to approach them. Especially for those brands that are endorsed by the Heavenly Kings and Queens. I believe those will be the most difficult to take down. We can only try our luck and see how it turns out."

Zhang Ye said, "Make a list then."

Ha Qiqi said, "Alright."

Try our luck?

This wasn't Zhang Ye's style!

They would either go big or go home!

The "Reach the Summit" plan was a proposal that was drawn up to aid Zhang Ye in his goal to achieve S-list status. It involved a chain of steps, and the first step was done to pave the way for the second step, the second was done to lay the foundations for the third, while the fourth step to make a variety show was to service the fifth step's target. It was done to help Zhang Ye gain the maximum popularity and get continuous increased exposure in the television show industry. That would help increase his onscreen appeal so that the fifth step could be completed more smoothly!

And the fifth step of the plan was: fight for endorsements!

So why did they choose this time period to take action?

Because many of the major brand endorsements were due to expire during this period of time. There were at least seven or

eight suitable lucrative endorsement deals whose contractual obligations with their celebrity spokespersons were expiring or had expired. Some of these endorsements might be renewed, but others had not been confirmed for renewal. That was why this window of time was extremely important for them!

For some of the ordinary endorsement deals, there shouldn't be a need for A-or B-list celebrities to fight for them. Some of the lousier endorsement deals might even get rejected by celebrities who were a little more famous. They wouldn't take the deal even if it paid a lot. Only some of the has-been celebrities or newcomers to the industry would be willing to earn this sort of money.

But for some of the bigger brand-name endorsements, even the A-list celebrities would have to fight for them. This wasn't simply about money, as some endorsements were a great help to raise the names and public presence of those celebrities. Citing an example, a big spender leading health supplement company like Brain Gold had already thrown out over tens of millions of yuan to the various major television stations to buy their commercial spots and did not even feel a pinch. Just the title sponsorship fees for I Am a Singer had already cost them 200 million RMB. Every time a 15-second Brain Gold commercial finished broadcasting, there would be a shot of Zhang Ye onscreen. He would be shown on Beijing Television, Shanghai Television, and even Hunan Television.

Why?

Because Brain Gold had bought the commercial spots on all of those stations!

Because Zhang Ye was the spokesperson for Brain Gold!

He could get paid and get the help of a corporation buying commercial spots while gaining more exposure himself. As such, who wouldn't want to fight for it?

But some of the smaller companies and brands didn't have the capacity to do so. In fact, some of the shoddier and more inferior

brands might even bring down the image and popularity of a celebrity. If anyone saw it, they would surely react by thinking, Whoa, you're even taking this lousy ad? Just how badly are you doing that you'd need to accept it? That would cause the common folk to lower their perception of said celebrity, and they might really start wondering if the celebrity was really that hard up for money. It would then cause the celebrity's endorsement value to drop and lower their market influence. As a result, the other brand names would have a lower valuation of the celebrity as well and wouldn't look to use them even if they had a good advertisement campaign coming up. Therefore, the waters of the endorsement industry were very deep. The brands with potential were all fought over, while nobody cared for the lesser ones. There was just no uniform reception them.

And this time, Zhang Ye was getting ready to dip his hands into the endorsement industry!

Do not underestimate the popularity brought by advertising exposure. One or two of them might not mean much.

But what about three?

Five?

Or eight?

Just imagine, when the people turned on their televisions each day, every channel would be showing Zhang Ye. As long as the television was on, there would be a commercial with Zhang Ye in it. As long as they visited an online video hosting site, there would be advertisements with Zhang Ye's picture. What kind of a concept was that? That was the power of forced advertising, and it would be enough to increase Zhang Ye's popularity by a great deal!

This was the fifth step of the "Reach the Summit" plan!

If they could complete this step, the plan to reach the summit would surely be nearing its completion!

They were approaching the day they could finally be crowned with success!

Chapter 1238: Isn't this advertising message a little too casual?

Monday.

Later that morning.

A crowd of guests arrived at the studio.

Little Wang opened the door. "You all are?"

The leader of the group smiled. "We have an appointment with your Manager Ha."

"Chairman Ma." Ha Qiqi came over to welcome them with a big smile. "You even dropped by personally? Come in quickly. Our studio isn't that big, so please make do with the space."

"It's a pretty nice place," Chairman Ma said as he looked around.

He was a vice chairman, but salutations generally wouldn't carry the word "vice" in it.

Ha Qiqi invited them to take a seat. "Director Zhang is taking a call upstairs, so please wait for a little while."

Chairman Ma said with a laugh, "That's fine, there's no need to be so courteous. It's not the first time I'm meeting Teacher Zhang anyway. We worked together on a second-tier ad during The Voice, so we're quite familiar with each other. My company understands Teacher Zhang very well as a person. We can only say that he is, as you Beijingers put it, 'fair and just.' That second-tier ad couldn't be called great, but after our company's people watched the show, we realized that Teacher Zhang would always chip in a few more words for us during the intermissions. That greatly increased the exposure of our products, and we weren't even charged an additional cent for it, so that was a really nice touch."

Ha Qiqi said, "That's right, Director Zhang has always been like that. Everyone has been so supportive of him and spent so much

money as well, so the least that he could do was make it worthwhile for you all."

Chairman Ma nodded and said, "That's why when we heard that you all were interested in taking an endorsement, Chairman Xu got me to come down personally to see you right away. The timing is perfect since the previous two-year endorsement deal that we had just expired." He pointed behind himself and said, "We even brought our lawyer over. If we can negotiate this deal successfully, we can sign the contract immediately."

Ha Qiqi said, "Sure."

At this moment, Zhang Ye came downstairs.

"Yo, Chairman Ma."

"Haha, Teacher Zhang."

"Sorry to keep you waiting. I had a call from the television station."

"I know that you're busy with your new show, it's fine."

"So how's the endorsement deal going?"

"How can it? Ha, we're just waiting for you to give us the nod."

"Chairman Ma sure is easy to work with. We haven't even discussed the payment yet."

"Just name a price."

"Are we going to use my advertising proposal?"

"It would be best if we could use yours. Who in the industry doesn't know about those classic ads that you came up with? So many advertising agencies have turned them into teaching material. To be honest, we wanted to hire you as the spokesperson for our dairy product because we would also like to use your advertising proposal."

"In that case, the endorsement fees might have to be a little

higher."

"That's not an issue as long as the proposal is good!"

The endorsement deals in the Chinese market usually lasted for two years, while some were even one-year deals. As for the price, based on Zhang Ye's worth in the market, a year's worth of endorsement fees should probably be in the upper range of several million. It could be 6 million RMB or 8 million RMB. But even the best offer would not pass 10 million a year, and that was with the condition that Zhang Ye come up with the advertising proposal.

Zhang Ye's endorsement fees with Brain Gold were actually much higher, but that was because it was a different situation. The Brain Gold Company did not base their valuation of Zhang Ye on his market worth. Brain Gold had gotten to where they were now because of an advertisement made by Zhang Ye. As an almost bankrupt company with the worst health supplement products in the market, they became the country's leading health supplement brand within just two years. To say they had achieved this due to Zhang Ye was not an overstatement at all. It could almost be said that this was a miracle that was single-handedly performed by Zhang Ye, so their endorsement fees for him were definitely much higher. But for the other companies that already had a mature presence in the market, their endorsement fees would still be based on the market rates.

Due to their previous cooperation, the negotiations between the two parties proceeded very smoothly.

The endorsement deal was for two years and valued at a total of 15 million RMB.

An additional term specified to the dairy company was: The budget spent on advertising each year must not be less than X amount.

While the condition for Zhang Ye was: He couldn't endorse similar brands during the contractual period and had to provide

them with a full advertising proposal.

The contract was signed.

Then Ha Qiqi took out the advertising proposal Zhang Ye had spent two minutes writing in the morning and showed it to the dairy company.

Chairman Ma took it from her in anticipation.

The company staff around them also came forward to have a look at it.

But when they saw it, every one of them was speechless.

Chairman Ma said, "Teacher Zhang, there's only going to be one sentence for the advertising message?"

Zhang Ye nodded. "That will be the only sentence."

Chairman Ma wiped his sweat away and said, "Is it really going to be only this sentence?"

Zhang Ye nodded and said, "The core catchphrase will really only be that. I'm just providing the standard proposal for a 10 to 15 second TV commercial. I can also supervise the filming of the commercial, but for all the other matters like the follow up to the ads and Internet marketing, that will have to be handled by your company's advertising team." It wasn't possible for him to take charge of the soft marketing content and guerrilla marketing content. First, he didn't have the time to do so, and second, there was no need for it either. Their company would have a dedicated advertising team to oversee such matters.

Chairman Ma said, "That's for sure, but..."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Don't worry about it; there won't be any problems."

"Then...alright," Chairman Ma said.

The dairy brand company's employees looked at one another.

Fuck!

W-Would this really work?

Wasn't this advertising message a little too casual?

Chairman Ma was feeling extremely skeptical. But because of Zhang Ye's results and achievements in the industry, he didn't think that he should bring it up. As such, he could only take his staff with him and return back to their company.

After they left.

Little Wang immediately cheered, "That was too easy! We've successfully negotiated with one company!"

Wu Yi said happily, "What an auspicious start."

Zhang Zuo was the manager of internal communications of the studio, so when Ha Qiqi and the others were holding a meeting, he didn't come out to join them. When he finally came downstairs, he said, "They're one of the top three dairy brands in the country and have always had quite a good reputation. The quality of their dairy products put them at the higher end of the market, so it'd be good to get more of such products to endorse. It's a good thing that Director Zhang worked with them before this, or it wouldn't have been so easy to get it finalized."

Ha Qiqi flipped through her notes and said, "Director Zhang, I've also made an appointment with the next company. I'll be heading over to meet with their manager this afternoon to chat with them."

Zhang Ye asked, "Which industry are they in?"

Ha Qiqi said, "They're the number one reader app in the industry."

Little Wang immediately said, "I know it, I know it; I use that app to read books too."

Zhang Ye also seemed to have an impression of it. "I think Sister Zhang is their spokesperson, right?"

"Yes, it's Heavenly Queen Zhang's endorsement." Ha Qiqi blinked. "But I think the contract has expired."

Zhang Ye still had principles even though he was out to grab endorsements. Since it was his good friend's endorsement deal, he would have to ask her about it first. If she intended to continue endorsing them, he would definitely not get involved.

"Let's see, I'll go make a call first." Zhang Ye then went upstairs to call Zhang Yuanqi on her cell phone.

The call finally connected after ringing for a very long time.

There was definitely no one with Old Zhang as she didn't answer in a very friendly tone.

Old Zhang said, "What?"

Zhang Ye asked, "Busy?"

"I'm on set, hurry up and talk."

"Sure, I'll make it short. Are you endorsing that reader app? The one with the highest readership in the industry."

"Yes."

"Has the endorsement deal expired? Are you looking to continue working with them?"

"You want the endorsement?"

"That's why I'm asking you first. If you are, I won't go for it."

"I won't be continuing with them. That company has too many requests; it's too troublesome for me."

"Alright, I understand."

After hanging up, Zhang Ye said to Ha Qiqi, "Go ahead with the negotiations. Old Zhang won't be looking to renew the endorsement."

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "Sure thing, that'll be good. Otherwise, we really couldn't snatch it from a Heavenly Queen."

Zhang Yuanqi was already someone at the summit, so her team surely had set their sights on the international market. Their goals would be different from Zhang Ye's and were surely of a different level too. As such, many of the things that she might find troublesome would not be troublesome for Zhang Ye. This was the number one reader app in the market, so it already had an air of culture to it. It would be a very good advertisement to feature in and had a good quality to it as well. Zhang Ye was an author himself, and being involved in the literary arts, such an endorsement fit well with his identity and was thus more suited for him. For the app reader company, this would also be true. In the realm of reading, even though Zhang Yuanqi was a very popular figure, the effects of her endorsement definitely would not be that much better than Zhang Ye's endorsement. There might even be a chance that her influence in this area was not going to be better than Zhang Ye's. As a result, the negotiations to get this endorsement were still very open and should be quite easy for them to take.

Chapter 1239: Fighting a Heavenly King for an endorsement!

One!

Two!

Three!

In just a few days, the staff of Zhang Ye's Studio secured three major endorsements in the market. The progress of their work was going very smoothly. After ensuring that I Am a Singer's recording would be able to carry on normally, Zhang Ye began focusing more effort on the advertisement endorsement projects that he had taken. In recent days, he had met up with many brand-name companies' representatives and written up so many advertising proposals that he nearly used all of the best advertising ideas from his previous world. They had thought that the fifth step of the "Reach the Summit" plan could be completed without a hitch, but there were still several hard nuts to crack along the way.

Fortunately, Zhang Ye had some ideas of his own to deal with that.

It was for a jewelry brand of diamond rings that the studio's staff had been working hard to seal the deal with to no avail. This was the largest brand name of diamond rings in the country, even if its revenue could not compare to those of the mass market jewelry chains. However, they were not targeting the mass market but the higher end luxury market. Their customers were all people from the upper class. Just a single diamond ring could easily go for the higher end of tens to hundreds of thousands of yuan, so of course they could not go the mass market route. But the brand's image was very good and also the reason Zhang Ye's team had identified it as a potential target. Additionally, the company's endorsement contract had expired a month ago, so they were thinking about how they could take it.

At the studio.

Ha Qiqi frowned and said, "Director Zhang, we still can't convince them."

Zhang Ye looked at her. "Is it too difficult?"

"Yeah," Ha Qiqi said, "they might've identified someone else. During this month of endorsement blackout, they've probably made contact with quite a few celebrity teams. All they have to do is decide who they want to represent their brand."

Wu Yi said, "Could they be thinking of not getting a celebrity spokesperson?"

"That's shouldn't be the case." Ha Qiqi said, "They're not short on money."

Zhang Zuo suggested, "Why don't we lower our asking price?"

Zhang Ye said emphatically, "That won't do."

Ha Qiqi agreed, "Yes, we cannot lower our asking price."

Lowering one's asking price in order to grab an endorsement deal was a pretty sensitive affair. In the past, there had been cases of celebrities lowering their endorsement fees. A male celebrity who was worth around 2 million in the endorsement market had offered to lower his asking price due to getting into gambling and was hard up for money. In the end, he lowered it to 800,000 RMB a year and managed to take quite a lot of endorsement deals. However, he had broken the industry rules. Ever since then, no other brands dared to approach him, and his popularity fell by a lot. Some of the companies who signed him for a much higher amount criticized him badly for this behavior. You're charging others 800,000 RMB a year, but 2 million RMB for us? What's the meaning of this? Do you think we're suckers?

Hurting the market.

Soiling one's own reputation.

These were the risks of lowering one's asking price.

In the entertainment industry, reputation was the most important thing there was. With Zhang Ye's current status and popularity, there wasn't a need to lower his asking price in order to get a deal. That would be too low for someone like him. The entertainment industry's number one person below the S-list had to lower his worth to fight other A-and B-listers for endorsements? It wouldn't be good if this got out. A lot of matters in the entertainment industry were not simply about money and couldn't be solved by simply adopting a business mentality.

Ha Qiqi said, "I haven't spoken to them in-depth yet, nor have I let them know about our intentions. That would make us look like we're trying to push a sale and lower our worth. But they haven't revealed anything to us either. Why don't I try to speak with them again to find out what their intentions are? Otherwise, we can switch our target to a different company and not waste our time trying to convince them. Hai, but then the other jewelry brands' endorsement deals have not expired yet, so that's real unfortunate."

Tong Fu said, "What about the mass market jewelry brand chains?"

Ha Qiqi shook her head. "That won't do. If we take too many smaller brands, it would be quite meaningless. We won't be able to bring up our endorsement profile."

Zhang Ye thought about it for a moment. "Let's lay all our cards on the table then."

"OK." Ha Qiqi said, "How though?"

Zhang Ye said a few words to her.

Ha Qiqi was stunned and her jaw dropped. "Are you sure?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Of course I'm sure."

Ha Qiqi said happily, "Aiyo, you should have said so earlier."

...

Later that afternoon.

At a certain jewelry company.

In the lobby on the eleventh floor.

Ha Qiqi brought Tong Fu along with her.

The female receptionist stood up. "Hello?"

Ha Qiqi said, "I'm here to look for Director Cui."

The receptionist asked in an official tone, "May I know if you have an appointment with him?"

"I do. My name is Ha Qiqi," Ha Qiqi said.

The receptionist lowered her head to check the appointment schedule before saying, "Hello, Manager Ha, your appointment is at 3 PM. Director Cui is currently in a meeting, so please wait—"

As she was speaking.

Director Cui and two young men came walking over side by side and seemed to be heading for the conference room.

Ha Qiqi went up to him. "Director Cui."

Director Cui was taken aback. "Manager Ha, you're here so early?"

Ha Qiqi laughed and said, "What Manager Ha? I'm just an errand girl for Director Zhang."

The two young men beside him probably recognized Ha Qiqi as well, so they started looking somewhat wary of her. She was Zhang Ye's Studio's external communications manager, so who in the industry wouldn't recognize her?

Ha Qiqi and Tong Fu also recognized them. The short-haired young man did not look familiar to them, but Ha Qiqi the other young man who had a ponytail. This guy was also pretty well-known in the industry and was the younger cousin of a Heavenly

King. He was also one of several managers of that Heavenly King. When she saw him, Ha Qiqi instantly knew what was going on. She understood just why the jewelry brand's representatives had been hesitating with their decision. It was because there was a big name celebrity among their choice of spokespersons, someone with a place among the top seven spots, an S-list celebrity much more famous than Zhang Ye.

Fighting a Heavenly King for an endorsement?

Ha Qiqi suddenly found this rather exciting.

Meanwhile, Director Cui felt a little awkward. "This..."

Every celebrity would have a "territory" of their own. In the industry, almost every brand's endorsement had already been taken by a celebrity. For example, Chen Guang, who endorsed a cell phone brand that focused on sound quality, had been doing so for three years now. The money was good and the advertisement coverage was wide as well. It was a quality endorsement deal and was where Chen Guang's territory was. If any other celebrity tried to snatch this endorsement from him, they would offend him for sure. A lot of celebrities had had relationships turn sour because of such endorsement deals. A quality endorsement deal was the livelihood of a celebrity and also a source of their long-term income.

Director Cui clearly understood this and was hoping that the two parties wouldn't bump into each other, but to his surprise, he still couldn't keep that from happening. In truth, he had already made up his mind. Faced with deciding between a Heavenly King and several A-list celebrities, he was of course more inclined to choose the Heavenly King. Disregarding any other factors, his fame alone was enough for him to make the choice. However, he also considered using Zhang Ye since he was also very popular. Further, he was constantly at the forefront of the news in recent times and had an exposure that was definitely comparable to the Heavenly Kings and Queens'. He also coveted the advertising proposals that

Zhang Ye was famous for. The only factors holding him back were that Teacher Zhang was considered an oddity in the industry and had an image that fluctuated between high and low at times. He was just afraid that he might kick up some issues again in the future that would affect the image of their brand, and thus, the hesitation.

Director Cui said, "Manager Ha, why don't you—"

Ha Qiqi laughed. "Let's talk together, Director Cui. We're already here and we all know each other."

The Heavenly King's cousin was shaking his head in his mind. We're already here, so what do you have to discuss?

Director Cui couldn't offend both of them, so he looked at the Heavenly King's cousin for direction."

The Heavenly King's cousin shrugged. "Anything is fine."

"Well, alright then. Please, follow me." Director Cui ushered them into a conference room. When everyone got seated, he had an assistant serve them tea.

The Heavenly King's cousin was obviously prepared for the meeting.

The moment his assistant sat down, he took out a document and started rambling. His introduction was all about how great they were and the positive results of their past cooperations with other brands. In short, all of that was mentioned so they could talk about the endorsement fees. Naturally, they hoped to get as much out of it as possible.

For a full five minutes, only he was speaking.

Director Cui occasionally nodded at him even though he already knew all of it.

He was a Heavenly King.

Had a pretty good reputation.

And was extremely popular as well.

But his asking price wasn't so high that it was unacceptable.

Although Zhang Ye's side's asking price was much lower, their company had enough of a budget for it. Several million yuan for a one-year endorsement was not exactly much to them. That was why even if Zhang Ye's asking price was only 8 million RMB while the Heavenly King was asking for almost double at 14 million RMB, they didn't really mind. What they cared about was how much the celebrity's endorsement could increase their revenue. For all brand endorsements, this had always been the ultimate objective. But of course, not minding didn't mean they would pay however much the celebrities asked for. It still had to be cost-effective since no one's money would just appear out of thin air. They would pay whatever the celebrities were worth, and on that point, the difference in value between an S-list and A-list celebrity was clearly going to be larger, even if that A-list celebrity was the top A-list celebrity.

Director Cui already had an idea of who he would go.

The Heavenly King's cousin asked, "Director Cui, if everything's fine, let's discuss the contract.

Director Cui smiled and said, "We'll still have to negotiate the price, but yes, we can talk about the contract."

The Heavenly King's cousin nodded and then looked at Ha Qiqi and Tong Fu. "What about the others?" What he meant was for them to leave. Discussing such an important issue as the contract would have to be done in private.

Director Cui also looked at Ha Qiqi. "Manager Ha, why don't..."

A sensible person could see what was going on.

However, Ha Qiqi did not move from her seat.

Director Cui blinked several times at her.

The two people on the Heavenly King's management team frowned.

But then, a single sentence from Ha Qiqi dumbfounded everyone in the room. She calmly said, "Teacher Zhang is getting married soon."

What?

Getting married?

Director Cui was taken aback. "When?"

Ha Qiqi said, "Within the year."

Director Cui gasped excitedly. "A-Are you sure?"

"I'm a 100 percent sure," Ha Qiqi said with a smile.

Director Cui's breathing quickened as he said, "Please wait a moment. This news is too sudden. I need to make a call first." He wasn't the head of the company, just the head of the advertising department. As such, he had to seek instructions from the higher-ups.

The two on the Heavenly King's team were stunned!

Within just two minutes, Director Cui returned with around eight other staff members. The moment he came in, Director Cui said, "Manager Ha, about Teacher Zhang's endorsement, can we talk about it?"

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "But of course. That's what I'm here for, aren't I?"

Director Cui had gotten clear instructions from the company's CEO!

He was to sign Zhang Ye!

At all costs!

...

Outside the company.

The Heavenly King's cousin and his assistant headed downstairs dejectedly. They had let it slip out of their hands. It gave them the impulse to curse and swear. It made them feel furious and, at the same time, not know whether to laugh or cry!

Your sister!

You can even do it like that?

This is the first time I've seen anyone snatch away an endorsement like that!

Chapter 1240: A Heavenly Queen's agent genuflects!

The next day.

They held a meeting at the studio.

Little Wang said in surprise, "Sister Ha, did you really seal the deal?"

Ha Qiqi laughed and said, "I really did. Even the contract has been signed."

Tong Fu was overjoyed and said, "You guys didn't see the expressions on those two bros' faces. I suppose we've terribly offended them, hai."

Wu Yi said, "Why do you still look so happy when you've offended others?"

Tong Fu said, "Well, it was fair competition."

Some people could not understand. "Sister Ha, how did you do it?"

Someone else said, "Yeah, haven't we been unable to convince them all this while? And we were even up against a Heavenly King for this endorsement? It's not that I'm lauding the enemy and belittling our own master, but I'm making an objective observation here. Be it popularity, image, or honors, uh, I don't think that we have any fight, do we?"

Zhang Ye came down from upstairs. "It's because I'm getting married."

"Ah?"

"What?"

"Damn, really?"

"Congratulations, Director Zhang!"

"Didn't you just get engaged?"

"You're getting married this soon? That's great!"

"I knew it!"

"Yeah, so it's the jewelry brand that wants to get your favor!"

"Pfft, that's such a lethal tactic that leaves the jewelry company with no grounds to reject you!"

"When I learned that they were offering to us 10 million a year for the endorsement, I thought that they must have gone crazy. So it's because of this. They're preparing to make full use of your wedding to create publicity. I suppose they'll be the designated jeweler for your wedding then? No wonder the jewelry company is willing to pay so much."

It finally dawned on everyone!

This was a surefire kill!

This tactic was too fucking ruthless!

Yes. Their Teacher Zhang did not have any advantages over the opponent. His popularity and image were not as good as that Heavenly King's. By comparing them side by side, Zhang Ye would definitely lose out to him by quite a bit. However, Zhang Ye was about to get married, which was the only thing no one in the entire entertainment industry could outdo. The identity of Zhang Ye's fiancée was still being actively discussed in the industry. The citizens were making wild guesses. In fact, even the studio's staff did not know who she was and were incredibly curious. The topicality of such discussions had previously reached a high. And now, once Zhang Ye announced that he would be getting married, just how much attention would it get? No one dared to imagine it. The Heavenly Kings and Queens were either single or secretly married, so how were they going to fight with Zhang Ye over the jewelry endorsement?

Even a Heavenly King would have to kneel to that!

This advantage Zhang Ye had could crush everyone else!

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Everyone, it's good enough that you know about it, but please don't spread the news for now."

Zhang Zuo immediately asked, "Do you need our help with your wedding?"

"Not for now," Zhang Ye chuckled. "Me and my fiancée's parents are handling it for now. We haven't agreed on a date yet, but it'll be within the year. It won't be long now, so if I still need everyone's help at that time, I'll let you know in advance. Don't worry, none of you will be able to run off. Everyone's mission now is to take all of the endorsements that we've identified. Whichever of those major brand names that can be taken, take it. Every single one counts. Just do it without any restraints. Be it a Heavenly King or Heavenly Queen, I'm not afraid of offending anyone."

"OK!"

"Understood!"

"Director Zhang, congrats once again!"

"Thanks!"

After saying a few words.

Ha Qiqi took out a copy of a document. "This will be the toughest nut to crack."

Zhang Zuo frowned. "Is it that sanitary ware brand?"

Ha Qiqi gave a wry smile and said, "Yes, this will be the most difficult deal to get. It's almost impossible, so I really don't know where to start with them. Director Zhang, do you have any suggestions?"

Zhang Ye said, "Give me a brief introduction to the brand."

Ha Qiqi said, "This is the biggest sanitary ware brand in the country..."

As the leader of the industry, this sanitary ware brand mainly promoted its toiletries in the market. It had an extremely high market share in the Chinese market, and even its expansion into the foreign markets was pretty good. In Southeast Asia, their brand awareness and market share were also very high. This product did not sound like it was something very good, nor should the celebrities be too willing to endorse a brand like it. Toiletries? Sanitary ware? It just didn't sound like it was something great. But it was quite the opposite. The competition to endorse this brand was the most intense of all the Chinese brand names. In the past six years, this brand had been fronted by a Heavenly King or Queen, and even some Asian megastars!

First, this brand was targeted at the high class.

Second, their company was supremely wealthy.

Third, they were not afraid of spending money. The advertising volume of this brand could easily be described as shocking. Not only did they flood China with advertising, they also did so for all of the Southeast Asian countries they had a presence in. This would also greatly boost the exposure of the endorsement stars as a result!

Therefore, this sanitary ware brand was identified as the most important piece of the fifth step in the "Reach the Summit" plan. It was also the endorsement project they placed the most emphasis on!

Zhang Ye asked, "Who was their previous spokesperson?"

Ha Qiqi replied, "It was a Korean celebrity, one of the Asian A-list superstars."

Zhang Ye asked, "What about now? Do we have other competitors?"

Ha Qiqi said in anguish, "Yes. Back then, we put in a lot of effort on this project because in the one year that the Korean celebrity

endorsed them, there hasn't been any significant growth in the domestic sales of the sanitary ware brand. I found out that they wouldn't be renewing the endorsement contract as a result, so I thought that we would surely stand a chance of getting it. But who could've expected that there would be an intruder when one of the Heavenly Queen's agent suddenly joined the bid as well? When I mentioned that you were going to get married soon, the company's representative did not seem to react. I suppose that isn't enough to move them, so I didn't go into any further detail with them. It looks to me that they've already decided which Heavenly King or Queen to use for their endorsement."

Zhang Ye blinked. "It's not Old Zhang, right?"

"No," Ha Qiqi said, "Sister Zhang won't take such endorsements."

Zhang Ye nodded. "Alright then. If it were Old Zhang, I wouldn't want to fight her for it. But for anyone else, they're all fair game. We'll just have to see who's more capable."

Ha Qiqi said, "But the problem is that we don't stand out at all."

Zhang Ye said, "It's a toiletry brand, right?"

"Yes, it's a sanitary ware company that mainly focuses on their toiletries," Ha Qiqi said.

Zhang Ye thought for a moment before saying, "How about this, give me an hour."

Ha Qiqi was taken aback.

An hour?

What are you planning?

Nobody understood.

Zhang Ye went upstairs, and the sound of someone singing could be heard after a while.

When everyone heard that, they were even more confused about what Zhang Ye was doing.

...

On the same night.

Ha Qiqi arrived at Shanghai by plane.

The moment she got off her flight, she called the deputy director who was in charge of the sanitary ware company's brand management.

"Director Bai, it's me."

"Oh, it's Manager Ha. Hello."

"Regarding your company's endorsement deal, we've communicated with you about it before. Can we have an in-depth discussion about it this time?"

"About that, Director Ha, I'm really sorry. We've long heard of Teacher Zhang Ye and have been wanting to work with him as well, but I'm afraid this time...we've essentially made a decision. We can only hope to work together with you all next time. Is that alright?"

"Hur hur, Director Bai, then would it be fine if we just have a meal together?"

"Aiya, I'm afraid I can't today."

"But I'm in Shanghai. Surely you wouldn't just turn me down, would you?"

"Ah? You're in Shanghai?"

"Yeah, I just got off the plane."

"Aiyo, alright then, I'll send someone to pick you up."

"Thank you very much, Director Bai."

An hour later.

At the headquarters of the sanitary ware company.

Ha Qiqi spotted Director Bai, as well as that Heavenly Queen's

agent.

"Director Bai."

"Manager Ha, sorry to trouble you for coming all this way."

"Hai, it's all for business."

"Let me introduce you."

When he finished introducing both parties.

Ha Qiqi and the Heavenly Queen's agent shook hands with each other.

The Heavenly Queen's agent smiled and said, "Boss Ha, I've long heard of your great name."

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "You're too kind. It's me who's long heard of your great name."

The agent grinned and said, "Teacher Zhang has been rather active these days, huh? I heard that he's taken quite a few endorsements recently. He's even taken an endorsement that another Heavenly King had his eyes on."

Ha Qiqi giggled. "It's just fair competition. We've always advocated a win-win situation for the parties involved."

The Heavenly Queen's agent gave her a look. "Right, fair competition. I like those words."

Just from the simple conversation they had, hostilities flared.

Ha Qiqi and the people she brought with her were standing on the left side, while those from the Heavenly Queen's team were standing on the other side.

Director Bai bluntly said, "Since everyone's here, I'll cut to the chase. First off, thank you for thinking so highly of our brand. This is the greatest recognition we can get, and I'd like to thank all of you on behalf of the company. Next, we have given a lot of consideration to the endorsement deal, though the final decision

will still have to be approved by the company's CEO. That's why we'll just eat and drink today, not talk shop. Since all of you are here, we're all friends today."

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "Sure, we'll do as Director Bai says."

The Heavenly Queen's agent also smiled, apparently confident that they had already won. They were not feeling any pressure.

This was the company's reception room.

On the large round table the dishes were quickly served.

Director Bai was actually in a predicament. He hadn't expected that the two celebrities' teams would follow up on the endorsement deal so closely. At first, he wanted to meet with Ha Qiqi alone but hadn't expected that the Heavenly Queen's agent would be so thick-skinned to follow. He felt that it wouldn't be nice to say anything about it, so he was forced to allow all of them to sit together. He was really afraid that the two parties would clash.

But surprisingly, Ha Qiqi was holding up pretty well.

She ate.

And drank.

And did not refuse any food or toasts that were offered to her.

All the while, she made no mention of the endorsement contract.

This impressed Director Bai, and he couldn't help but start wondering what she was planning. Honestly, the moment their main office received the quote from the Heavenly Queen's team, they decided on hiring her. Although the asking price was high, she had the fame to back it up. There was no reason for them not to work with her. As for Zhang Ye, they also found it rather tempting to hire him. Teacher Zhang was always talked about, appearing in the headlines every other day and had a very high public exposure. But even considering all of those points, they still felt that Zhang Ye's status in the entertainment industry was not

comparable to any of those seven S-list celebrities.

The Heavenly Queen's agent did not talk about business.

Ha Qiqi was steady as a rock.

As it turned out, it was Director Bai who couldn't hold it in. He smiled and said, "I Am a Singer has been doing quite well."

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "Director Bai watches it too?"

Director Bai laughed and said, "Of course I watch it. Everyone in the company, including my family, watches it. Why isn't Teacher Zhang thinking of participating? He sings really well too."

Ha Qiqi said, "He can't compare with those great singers."

"How modest." Director Bai asked, "Has Teacher Zhang released any new songs recently?"

Ha Qiqi suddenly said, "Now that you mention it, Director Zhang has written a new song."

Director Bai got interested as he liked Zhang Ye's songs a lot. "Oh? What kind of song is it?"

Ha Qiqi looked at him. "How about I let you give it a listen?"

Director Bai said in surprise, "I can listen to it ahead of release?"

Ha Qiqi said, "Director Bai is no stranger, so of course you can."

Those on the Heavenly Queen's team looked at her.

Then they saw Ha Qiqi take her cell phone out and plug in earphones. She increased the volume before handing it to Director Bai. "Just press play and see how you like it."

Director Bai said in anticipation, "Alright, I'll have a listen!"

Getting a chance to listen to Zhang Ye's new song first? That was quite an honor for him!

Director Bai looked down at the screen and pressed play. Then he got startled.

Eh?

This title?

" Toilet "?

A song existed with this title?

Through the earphones came the sound of singing. Perhaps due to the volume being too loud, even those who were sitting close by could hear it. The people on the Heavenly Queen's team pricked up their ears too.

As a result, the first verse that was sung stunned all those in the room!

"I have a toilet at home.

"There is a hole in the throne.

"Above the hole a smile's always shown.

"Smiling at how helpless we are alone."

This is?

This is?

Director Bai got the goosebumps!

The people on the Heavenly Queen's team were all dumbfounded!

"Every house has a toilet.

"Everyone has to use it.

"After every use you feel relaxed and carefree.

"Guaranteed to make you infinitely happy.

"Every single toilet is a hero.

"With just a simple flush,

"It can flush away all of your sorrows.

"No matter how much your pain,

"No matter how deep your loss,

"For you, it will take all of it away!"

A female employee on the Heavenly Queen's team let out a "pfft" and spat out all the fruit juice in her mouth onto the table!

Fuck, aren't you shameless?

Zhang Ye, aren't you too goddamn shameless?

"Every single toilet is a friend.

"You can trust it with all your heart.

"You can't do without it in your life.

"My secrets are too many.

"My dreams are too grand.

"But slowly, you will understand.

"My beloved toilet bowl!"

The song ended.

A toilet is a friend?

A toilet is a hero?

Everyone looked flabbergasted!

The Heavenly Queen's agent was even more at a loss and nearly fell out of her chair!

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "Director Bai, this song isn't too bad, right?"

But Director Bai got really excited. It was simply too good! It was so apt! This....Wasn't this song written with their sanitary ware brand in mind? Could there even be a more suitable song than this one?

They had to get it!

They most definitely had to get this song!

Director Bai stood up then and there. "How much does this song

cost?! We'll buy it!"

But Ha Qiqi shook her head. "Director Zhang never sells his songs. We only talk about working together."

Working together?

The endorsement?

The Heavenly Queen's agent got mad. "Director Bai! We've already agreed on the endorseme—"

"Manager Ha," Director Bai said firmly, "could we step aside to talk?"

Ha Qiqi said, "No problem."

The Heavenly Queen's team nearly fainted!

"Director Bai!"

"What's the meaning of this?"

"What's going on?"

"Didn't we already come to an agreement?"

"Director Bai, surely you can't do things this way, right?"

...

Half an hour later.

The Heavenly Queen's team left the sanitary ware company headquarters cursing and swearing!

"What the heck was that!"

"How could they be so unethical!"

"No one snatches endorsement deals the way they did!"

"The fuck was that! Zhang Ye's team is too goddamn immoral!"

"Shameless! Shameless to the max!"

"That guy's a real hooligan!"

Everyone felt as though their lungs were going to explode!

Every single toilet is a friend?

Friend? Your grandpa!

Every single toilet is a hero?

Hero? Your grandma!

Do you have a shred of moral integrity left in you?

Do you even have a bottom line that you don't cross?

Even a toilet can become a hero, so why haven't you ascended to Heaven yet!

As they cursed and swore, the Heavenly Queen's agent also started to feel a little amused. That song had really left her with nothing to say. She was so convinced that she could have no complaints! The client was marketing their sanitary ware brand, after all. Zhang Ye had mythologized the toilet into a hero, and even ended the song by fucking calling it "my beloved toilet bowl"? Faced with such an unconventional advertising jingle, who could possibly take the endorsement from him?

A Heavenly King?

A Heavenly Queen?

An Asian megastar?

Whoever came would surely kneel in defeat!

Whoever came would even have to kowtow to him!

This time, they had really underestimated Zhang Ye's team and totally underestimated Zhang Ye's level of shamelessness. He was really the greatest wonder of the entertainment circle and didn't play by the rules. All of his tricks were more devious than the last! But thinking about it again, so what even if they hadn't underestimated Zhang Ye this time? Could they have written a song like that? Even if they did, would the Heavenly Queen go and sing it? That would be impossible! Even if the Heavenly Queen was paid 100 million RMB in endorsement fees, she couldn't possibly go

and sing it. It was the same for all the other S-list celebrities, and maybe even the other A-list celebrities. None of them could be as thick-skinned as Zhang Ye and do so!

They had lost, but they couldn't complain!

Just on this point alone, they were forced to accept the loss!

This was really something that only Zhang Ye could have done. Moreover, it was done in that usual shameless style of his and was something that no one else could have copied!

Chapter 1241: The advertisements will roll out soon!

In the car.

The Heavenly Queen's agent called to that Heavenly Queen.

She said: "We didn't get it."

A very nice-sounding female voice at the other end of the line said: "Who got it then?"

She sighed and said: "Zhang Ye."

The voice on the other end said: "How did we lose it?"

She said: "It was my fault."

After giving a simple explanation of the entire story.

The other end of the line: "OK, I understand. Forget it then."

Yes, they could only forget it. If not, what else could they do?

They'd already gone as far as praising the toilet as a hero and a friend!

But what about them? Surely they couldn't hug the toilet and shout, "You're so awesome, my dearest brother," could they? They could only swallow this and find a chance to regain what they'd lost another time!

...

The next day.

The sanitary ware brand's contract agent and lawyer flew to Beijing with Ha Qiqi to sign an official two-year endorsement deal with Zhang Ye.

"Happy to be working with you, Teacher Zhang."

"Happy to be working with you too."

"Could we quickly start on the production and recording of the commercial?"

"Sure, I'll leave the arrangements to you all."

"You're the director, so why would you need to leave the arrangements to us?"

"Well, alright then."

"We'll support you with funding and manpower. As for the production work, we'll leave all the decisions to you."

"Sure, that won't be a problem."

After he was done over here, Zhang Ye hurried to the television station.

...

Four.

Five.

Six.

On this day, Zhang Ye's team closed six long-term endorsement deals.

Among these contracts, some of them went quite smoothly, others not so much. The crossing of swords and clashes between these celebrity teams was something better off not mentioned to an outsider. The infighting between celebrities was always like this, fighting with their popularity, fighting with their qualifications, and fighting with their image. Such fights were generally bloodless but were even more bloody and terrible than bloodbaths.

In the morning.

Zhang Ye received a call from Zhang Yuanqi's manager.

The moment it went through, Fang Weihong said with a laugh: "Teacher Zhang, you're snatching endorsements now?"

Zhang Ye said: "No, I'm not."

"Save it, I've already received news on my side." Fang Weihong wondered: "I heard that you've snatched two endorsement deals that a Heavenly King and Queen were very confident of getting? How did you do it?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "Personal charm probably?"

Fang Weihong half-jokingly said: "I'm telling you now, don't you dare think about those endorsements that Sister Zhang has on hand."

Zhang Ye said: "Well, of course. In any case, I couldn't get them even if I wanted to."

"Then I have nothing to worry about." Fang Weihong asked: "But I am really curious about how you did it. How did you secure the top sanitary ware brand's endorsement? Your team is really quite capable. There's something that I found a little strange as well. Two days ago, I bumped into that Heavenly Queen's management team at the bar that Teacher Zhou runs. There were a few young ladies who seemed to have drunk too much and were cursing at something. They mentioned something about a toilet, something about a hero, and what's that about a toilet being a good friend? Man, that scared me and I had to turn around while pretending that I didn't know them. Have those people gone crazy? What kind of a hole did you push them into? It looked like they were having a mental breakdown? They even called a toilet their friend? Isn't it just a sanitary ware ad? Did they really have to be so professional in their work?"

Zhang Ye was really amused. "Who knows what they were thinking?"

Fang Weihong said: "You should stop bringing harm upon others."

Zhang Ye said: "It has nothing to do with me, Sister Fang."

That song was called "Toilet," and was a very classic song back in Zhang Ye's previous world. The singer was the world-famous Andy Lau, Wah-zai! Back then, the song was also specially written for a certain sanitary ware brand in the market and proliferated through China. It wasn't common for an advertisement's song to get too popular, but "Toilet" was one of those that did. So when the mention of a sanitary ware endorsement came up, this song immediately came to Zhang Ye's mind.

Naturally, this news couldn't be contained.

The media gradually became aware of it.

"Zhang Ye's team takes a reader app endorsement deal!"

"Zhang Ye lands a deal to endorse one of the top three dairy brands in the industry!"

"Zhang Ye's team seizes a large share of the endorsement market!"

"The largest jewelry brand in the country has announced its next celebrity spokesperson—Zhang Ye! "

"A Heavenly King and Queen's teams are outdone by Zhang Ye's team in a battle of endorsement deals!"

"According to rumors, Zhang Ye's jewelry brand endorsement fee is valued at 10 million RMB per year!"

"Zhang Ye to hold his wedding within the year? A jewelry brand signs him on at all costs!"

"A Heavenly Queen's team misses out on the biggest sanitary ware brand's endorsement!"

"The most popular sanitary ware brand lands Zhang Ye!"

"A storm is brewing in the endorsement market!"

"Will Zhang Ye be the king of endorsements this year?"

"Stealing food off the plates of a Heavenly King and Queen?"

The industry was quite startled.

"Zhang Ye?"

"Why did he snap up so many endorsements?"

"What is Zhang Ye up to?"

"It's rare to see anyone take so many endorsement deals within 10 days!"

"Even a Heavenly King and Queen could not outdo him?"

"That isn't right, Zhang Ye should not have the ability to compete with those S-list superstars! How could so many of the major endorsements be taken by him?"

"No one grows fat in one sitting. Taking so many endorsements at once, can he manage them all? If the ads are rolled out too closely, it could counteract the effect, unless the quality of those ads are really good. But with so many endorsement commercials to shoot, no matter how famous he is in the advertising industry, he shouldn't be able to make them all classics, right?"

"Yeah, he's biting off more than he can chew."

After meal topics such as these were widely discussed across the industry.

However, Zhang Ye's team was still continuing to take more and more endorsements, as though they were never-ending!

Countless industry insiders were watching helplessly as many of the recognized quality endorsement deals got taken away by Zhang Ye's team one by one. At first, everyone was only feeling shocked but did not think much of it. But as it carried on, everyone could no longer sit still!

Isn't this too much?

Aren't you fucking taking way too many deals, bro!

Do you intend to leave anything for the other celebrities?

Without a doubt, this year's endorsement king would be Zhang Ye. Be it the number of brands that he was endorsing, or the total sum of endorsement pay he stood to receive, or even the number of endorsement deals he had signed, Zhang Ye was far ahead of the other celebrities. Even the people in the top seven spots of the entertainment industry did not have more endorsement deals than him!

There were voices of doubt everywhere!

Some of the A-and B-lists celebrities came forward as well.

On the Weibo of A-list film star, Jiang Hanwei: "Greed: The original sin." You might wonder if he was mocking Zhang Ye in his post.

There was also an agent of a B-list celebrity whose endorsement deal was snatched away by Zhang Ye who publicly criticized him. He didn't put it too offensively since he just said it to soothe his anger.

But Zhang Ye's fans blew up!

His troll army rushed over to that person's Weibo!

"Who are you criticizing?"

"Who the hell are you!"

"We're the only ones who can scold Zhang Ye! Who do you think you are?"

"It's all fair competition, what are you being so sour about!"

"My large saber is again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again unable to endure the thirst!"

Even Big Saber Bro made a flashy appearance!

It has been too long since there was a fight and the hordes of fearless fans were all crying out in excitement of an impending

scolding battle. Some of them couldn't wait for it to start, but nothing happened in the end!

Zhang Ye replied to that person almost immediately on his Weibo as well.

Zhang Ye's temper had become much better these days. He bluntly said to that agent: "Are you sure you want to have a go at me?"

A scolding battle?

A challenge to a fight?

When it came to arguing?

Even a seven-year-old child picked up off the streets would know that Zhang Ye had never lost one before!

Two minutes after Zhang Ye's reply, that B-list celebrity's agent sneakily deleted his Weibo post and made no mention of it anymore. It seemed he understood how powerful Zhang Ye's mouth could get. There had always been people in the entertainment industry having a go at Zhang Ye, but the only celebrity to have never lost in any scolding battle was Zhang Ye!

The agent admitted defeat.

So Zhang Ye did not carry it on.

Tongues in the industry were set wagging, while the other celebrities could only look on in envy. But with this minor episode, several of the brands that had signed endorsement contracts with Zhang Ye started to get a little worried.

...

That dairy brand's manager.

"Teacher Zhang."

"Yes?"

"Aren't you taking a few too many endorsements?"

"It's not that many."

"Will it affect the production of our commercial?"

"It won't."

...

The brand-name jewelry company.

"Director Zhang, can you give us a guarantee that the quality of our commercial will not be affected?"

"Don't you worry about it."

"But with just one line for the ad's catchphrase, isn't it a little too casual?"

"For a ten-second commercial, one line is more than enough."

"I'm just afraid that with all the endorsements you're taking, it'll affect the attention given to our brand."

...

All of the brand-name companies were feeling very unsettled.

Zhang Ye's team could only reassure them one by one.

Just how would Zhang Ye's commercials end up looking? This was something that no one knew. His studio staff could not predict it, and neither could the brand-name companies!

Only Zhang Ye knew that it wouldn't be a problem!

The commercials that he was going to make for them were market tested back in his previous world. Every one that he was going to bring out was a resounding classic of the advertising industry. It might not look outstanding and could even be billed as simple-looking, but the actual effects that it would bring were definitely on the level of a weapon of mass destruction like an atomic bomb. Simply tossing out one into the market would get it written into the annals of the advertising field. But Zhang Ye couldn't tell them that.

The commercials were about to get broadcast on the widest possible scale.

Once these commercials were rolled out to the market, all their doubts would be cleared up.

Chapter 1242: Attack of the advertisements!

On this morning.

The alarm was buzzing.

Zhang Ye climbed up from bed and shouted outside his room.

"Mom, turn on the television."

"Why?"

"It's broadcasting soon."

"What? It's today?"

"That's right."

"For which brand?"

"The mineral water brand."

His parents were watching the TV in anticipation.

After the morning news, Zhang Ye's first commercial played.

This was a commercial for one of his many endorsement deals. It was one of the last ones that they had taken but took the shortest time to produce. The mineral water company's commercial spots had been scheduled long ago, so they just needed to deliver the final product for broadcast. As such, this was the first commercial to get released. This was still a pretty good time slot as there were people who had just woken up and turned on their televisions, while some others might be packing their children's bags to get ready for school, and others who watched the news while eating breakfast. After the news broadcast, the image onscreen switched to the commercial. When everyone saw Zhang Ye on television, many of them were slightly taken aback.

It opened on a classroom, and Zhang Ye was teaching a class. He was writing on the blackboard when a mischievous student sneakily opened a water bottle under the desk to have a drink of

water. The squeaking of the plastic cap made Zhang Ye very angry and he chided the student. But after the class was over, Zhang Ye unexpectedly took out a bottle of the same mineral water, looking like he couldn't wait to drink it.

An advertising message appeared.

"Family Spring 1, a rather sweet thing."

The advertisement ended.

Then the next commercial played.

His mother was stunned.

His father was dumbfounded.

Zhang Ye said with a grin, "Dad, Mom, what do you think?"

His mother pointed at the television. "Was that it?"

"Yeah." Zhang Ye said, pleased with himself, "It's quite good, isn't it?"

His mother was floored and said, "What crap is this?"

His father smacked his lips. "Family Spring's mineral water is a well-known brand. I've drank it too, but how is it sweet?" His expression then changed as he looked at his son and said, "Did you add sugar to it?"

Zhang Ye was floored!

What the!

Why would I add sugar to it!

Whatever, I really can't communicate with you two!

At the same time, two of the largest online video hosting sites in the industry started pushing out the Family Spring commercial. As long as anyone played the movies or videos on their website, there would be 30-60 seconds of unskippable video ads that were pre-rolled, with the first ad being the Family Spring commercial that lasted for 15 seconds. The television stations also repeated

showings of the commercial at 8 AM, 10 AM, 12 PM, and at intervals of every two hours!

The commercial had been rolled out!

The volume at which it was played during the first day was extremely high!

The people of the advertising industry all had their attention on it, as did the competitors in the bottled water industry.

Zhang Ye was already one of the legendary figures of the advertising world. Not mentioning the few public service announcements he produced, just talking about the Brain Gold commercial alone, it was a real miracle. His commercial had launched a near-dead health supplements supplier into a leading corporation with the largest share of the health supplements market. Simply calling it a miracle of the Chinese advertising industry would be an understatement, since it was actually much greater than a miracle. And with this halo, Zhang Ye could command a much higher endorsement fee than his market value, which allowed him to fight the Heavenly Kings and Queens for the endorsements!

Now that he had come up with a new advertisement?

Who wouldn't want to gather around to analyze it!

As such, those people from the advertising industry and field of marketing all rushed over to watch it. But when they saw the commercial, they were all somewhat speechless. Their reactions were just like how Zhang Ye's mother had reacted!

What?

Was that it?

It was that simple a tagline?

What about that brainwashing technique that you used in your Brain Gold commercials? Where has that gone? What kind of a

commercial is this? Isn't this just a normal TV commercial?

Some people were feeling disappointed.

Some people rewatched it over a dozen times.

But there was no sense of shock!

It was not amazing!

For a commercial like that, they could easily write ten such advertising proposals within a minute!

Some discussions were going around on Weibo.

"It's Zhang Ye's new ad!"

"Have you guys watched it?"

"I saw it this morning!"

"A rather sweet thing? Bullshit! It's not sweet at all!"

"Hahaha, yeah, I purposely went out to buy a bottle to try it just now and didn't find it sweet."

"How is it not sweet? I found it to be somewhat sweet after I had a sip of it."

"Yeah, I bought a bottle too and found it to be a little sweet as well."

"Get lost! Where on earth can you find bottled water that is sweet! That's juice!"

"Taste it carefully, it's actually sweet!"

It was originally a random thread but nearly turned into a fight. No one could have expected that when a poll was posted the two groups of people would get locked in a fierce struggle over whether Family Spring's bottled water was really sweet or not. The poll results also surprised a lot of people as 30% of the voters said that Family Spring's bottled water was actually rather sweet. In fact, it really did seem that it was slightly different from the other brands of bottled water. And just like that, this advertisement went viral!

...

At a small supermarket in Beijing.

A couple were on their day off today and had come out to the supermarket to do some shopping.

"Darling, we don't have any more water left at home."

"Let's get a pack then."

"Eh, Family Spring? Isn't this the water that Zhang Ye was advertising this morning?"

"Yeah, it is. Everyone says that it's a little sweet."

"Let's get this then."

"Sure, let's buy it and have a taste."

So the couple called out to a supermarket employee for help. "Do you have a pack of Family Spring Bottled Water? We'd like to buy it."

The supermarket employee apologized, "The packs are sold out."

The wife said, "Ah?"

The employee said, "We only have individual bottles left."

...

At a streetside stall.

A teenage girl skipped over. "Auntie, give me a bottle of Family Spring."

The lady boss said, "Family Spring? We're out of stock."

The teenage girl said in surprise, "But I just saw you stocking up on it yesterday."

The lady boss was puzzled too and said, "I'm also not too sure why. But all morning, anyone who came to buy bottled water almost exclusively bought Family Spring. Only one other brand has been sold."

The teenage girl asked, "Is the water really sweet?"

The lady boss thought for a moment. "I think it's a little sweet, tangy sweet."

...

At night.

At the studio.

Zhang Ye had just returned to the office after filming a commercial.

Ha Qiqi, Zhang Zuo, and the others were all feeling perturbed and were talking among themselves. They didn't even notice Zhang Ye had stepped in.

"The commercial's been broadcast."

"Yeah, I wonder what the reception is like."

"It's pretty good. There's been quite a bit of discussion online."

"By reception, I mean the product sales."

"I really don't know about that. The commercial did seem a little too simple, ahem."

"They paid Director Zhang quite a bit for the endorsement, a premium sum even. If the commercial was not done well and causes their sales to drop, it would really look bad on us."

"That's true, we're only afraid of that happening."

Everyone was whispering among themselves.

Zhang Ye laughed from behind them. "Don't be worried about that."

"Aiyo."

"Director Zhang, you're back?"

Zhang Ye said, "Let's just do whatever we can do. There's still a lot of endorsement projects that we have to shoot. Is the

advertising proposal that I wanted ready yet? Let me have a look at it."

Zhang Zuo brought it over. "Here, Director Zhang."

Everyone busying themselves again.

All of a sudden, the studio's phone rang.

Ha Qiqi was the closest to it, so she picked it up. "Hello, this is Ha Qiqi."

The person on the other end of the line sounded jubilant. "Manager Ha, it's me!"

Ha Qiqi's heart skipped a beat. "Oh, it's AGM Li. Hello, how are you?"

AGM Li was the assistant general manager of Family Spring. "You guys did it! You guys really did it!"

Ha Qiqi did not understand. "What's the matter, Manager Li? What do you mean?"

AGM Li exclaimed: "It's only the first day, but our products all across the country have practically sold out! Sales increased by 42% compared to the same timeframe last year!"

"Ah?" Ha Qiqi was stunned.

Sold out?

Could the sales figure have increased by that much?

Surely not, right?

AGM Li belly laughed. "Just how did you all do it? You guys are astounding! You must thank Teacher Zhang for me. Our GM called for an urgent meeting earlier and was saying that he wanted to add another year to the endorsement contract with Teacher Zhang. There's still room for discussion about the pay, so just name however much you all want!"

Ha Qiqi said: "AGM Li, didn't we just sign a two-year

endorsement deal?"

AGM Li said: "How are two years enough? From now on, our company's endorsement won't be using anyone other than Teacher Zhang. We wouldn't mind signing an 18-year contract with him either!"

The call ended.

Everyone asked, "What's the matter, Sister Ha?"

Ha Qiqi swallowed before announcing, "Family Spring's mineral water has sold out!"

"Ah!"

"Really?"

"This is great!"

"Sold out on just the first day?"

"Fuck! Could it be any godlier than this?"

"But that water isn't sweet at all!"

Hearing their weird comments, Zhang Ye also laughed.

The commercial broadcast on television was originally from Zhang Ye's previous world and was a very old commercial for Nongfu Spring on Central TV. It was also after this commercial that Nongfu Spring became popular all over the country! If there was a ranking for the classic advertisements of Zhang Ye's previous world, this advertising tagline of "XX Spring, a rather sweet thing 2" would surely be in the top ten. It was a marketing legend that was on par with the Brain Platinum commercials of his previous world!

Simple?

This advertisement was not simple at all!

Just those words in that tagline alone were worth ten thousand taels of gold each!

Chapter 1243: The ad upgrades!

The next day.

A lot of people were waiting to see Zhang Ye make a joke of himself. Those from the celebrity teams who had had their endorsement deals snatched away by him, Family Spring's competitors in the industry, his foes, and even many of the insiders of the advertising and marketing world did not have any optimism regarding Zhang Ye's endorsement this time.

"He has taken too many endorsements."

"Yeah, that's why the quality isn't there."

"If the first ad is so average, I wonder how bad the rest are going to be?"

"Hai, Zhang Ye's reputation is going to get crushed."

"He asked for it by being so greedy."

"Family Spring is going to crash and burn."

"Yeah, what's the use of giving Zhang Ye such a high endorsement pay?"

"This advertisement is really too crappy. It's like something an intern would churn out."

However, the opportunity to see this joke happen did not come to pass. What came instead was an ear-ringing slap!

A lot of media outlets published news.

"Family Spring Bottled Water all sold out yesterday!"

Zhang Ye continues writing the legend of his ads!"

"Reporter's research: Family Spring Bottled Water sells like crazy!"

"Is Family Spring Bottled Water really sweet?"

"The phenomenal effect of Zhang Ye's new advertisement!"

"Family Spring's sales soar!"

"Family Spring to become the best-selling brand of bottled water in the fourth quarter?"

The other bottled water brands were stunned!

The people in the advertising world were stunned!

What was happening?

Sold out?

Are you fucking kidding me?!

A bottled water advertisement with only one sentence claiming that it was a rather sweet thing had helped it sell like crazy? Going by this logic, wouldn't an advertisement selling salted duck eggs just need a "rather salty" to take its sales figures to the moon? This didn't make any sense at all! This was nowhere in line with what they had learned from their advertising experience and logic!

Based on what?!

They simply couldn't believe this!

Meanwhile, the competing brands were starting to get anxious as if facing a formidable enemy. As similar bottled water brands, if Family Spring could sell one extra bottle of water, that would mean one bottle less of sales for them. This was unlike a health supplement product like Brain Gold. It wouldn't mean that anyone who bought a Brain Gold product would not buy other health products to supplement their iron or calcium intake. But the bottled water industry was different. This was the most direct kind of market war there was!

The netizens were amused.

"Pfft!"

"The legend continues?"

"It's like I saw a trace of Brain Gold in it from a few years back!"

"Family Spring has earned big bucks this time."

"The money they spent on Zhang Ye was not at all wasted!"

"I kinda liked that ad. 'Family Spring, a rather sweet thing.' That image and aftertaste immediately come to mind when you hear it. I even went out and bought two packs of it last night."

"I couldn't manage to get any yesterday."

"This bottled water has become really popular."

"The key is that it has a good taste. It's really quite nice."

"Haha, I bought it because of Zhang Ye. Can't help it, I'm a diehard fan of his. I'll buy whatever he endorses."

With that advertisement, he once again shocked the industry!

And that wasn't all. On the third day of the advertisement run, it received an upgrade!

Family Spring probably had some leftover stock of bottled water and needed to clear everything before introducing the ones with new packaging. Over the past two days of crazy sales, they cleared out most of their leftover stock. When the new packaging was introduced, in addition to Zhang Ye's picture on the labels, there was something new. The television commercial also had an additional line at the end.

"Family Spring, a rather sweet thing.

"For every bottle of Family Spring Bottled Water purchased, one cent will be donated to children in poor, rural areas."

All the other advertising content remained the same, except for the addition of this advertising tagline. On the product labels, details of this public welfare activity were printed in small text. As a result, even after Family Spring increased their bottled water shipments, they sold out again in just one night. All of this left everyone in disbelief and shock. It was as though Zhang Ye had

used some sort of sorcery to achieve it!

No one had ever used such a move in the past!

It wasn't even something that the advertising industry had thought of!

After they saw this commercial, many of the advertising industry insiders were dumbfounded!

So it could even be made this way?

So an advertisement could actually be made this way?!

The public reception was great.

"Not bad!"

"They're a brand with a conscience!"

"This is it, I'm only going to drink Family Spring Bottled Water from now on!"

"Yeah, we can even do charity while we're at it."

"Right, it's the same no matter what we drink. Besides, this water really does taste slightly sweet."

It sold like crazy in Beijing!

It sold like crazy in Shanghai!

It sold like crazy in Shenzhen!

All over the country, sales soared!

It was as though Family Spring had suddenly risen above two of its largest competitors and occupied the entire market overnight!

Zhang Ye had created a legend once more!

Yet another advertising miracle was born!

The staff of Family Spring were all laughing like crazy!

The brands and companies that had worried if Zhang Ye had taken too many endorsements were now feeling reassured. They

were increasingly looking forward to their own advertisements releasing to the market. There was only one thing left that they wanted to say: Teacher Zhang really lives up to his name!

...

After several days.

The advertising industry had come back to its senses.

In a lecture hall, a very experienced advertising director stood at a lectern, giving a lesson to nearly a hundred interested fellow professionals. "I'm sure that everyone here has seen this commercial that was just played. I believe that all of you have watched it maybe ten, twenty, or even thirty times over."

The seated audience nodded.

Only that?

Some of them had even watched it more than forty times!

The advertising director laughed and said, "When a lot of people see this commercial the first time, they find it to be very ordinary and possibly even quite unprofessional. It doesn't introduce the branding culture of Family Spring, nor does it mention how good the quality of their water is. Instead, it just says that it's 'a rather sweet thing.' Isn't that totally nonsensical?"

The crowd nodded again.

Yes, in what way was this advertisement any good?

Then the director said, "Then I can tell you all right now. 'A,' 'rather,' 'sweet,' 'thing'—just these four words are worth 15 million each!"

The audience burst into an uproar!

"Huh?"

"15 million?"

"Fuck!"

"Each word is worth 15 million?"

"Isn't that too much of an exaggeration?"

"The credit should go to Family Spring for having good quality water. It does seem to taste a little sweet."

When the director heard that, he couldn't help but burst out laughing. "Is the water seriously a little sweet? For that reason, I specially consulted with some experts in the water industry. I can clearly and confidently say that sweetness only comes from the presence of sugar. But for all of the bottled water brands in the country, including Family Spring, it's impossible that there could be any sugar or substitute sweetener in them. Zero, zip, zilch, there's not a single trace of sweetness to it!"

The people in the industry all looked at one another.

The director said, "After watching the commercial, I also went to buy a bottle of Family Spring Bottled Water to have a taste. It did seem to have a teeny bit of sweetness to it at the time, and I'm sure that everyone here also had a similar experience to mine. But in fact, that was just a bias we had, the most basic kind of psychological suggestion that we fell for. Family Spring's mineral water source comes from the Jade Lake, which is a basin fed by the mineral water that passes through the mountains around it. It is a naturally occurring mineral water that is collected through the self-cleaning and purification processes of the Jade Lake. Zhang Ye must have seen this information back then and thought of this: 'How can we let the consumers intuitively become aware of the origin of Family Spring's mineral water and learn about the brand? How can we form a beautiful impression of a sweet spring? How can we turn that image they have into consumption?' To achieve that, it would require a simple visual marketing concept to spread the idea. And Zhang Ye is really worthy of being hailed as the smartest person in the world. He very quickly came up with an idea using those four words—A! Rather! Sweet! Thing!"

Someone questioned, "Isn't that false advertising then?"

The director waved his hands. "You can't look at it that way. Sweetness does not equate to sugar content. Sweetness does not require the water to have sugar in it. Describing water as sweet is just synonymous for it being good quality water. Just like how stinky tofu is very smelly, but there are many people who say that it smells really good. Would that be considered false advertising too? Sweetness doesn't only convey the idea that this is a product of quality, it also makes the people think of the sweet and refreshing taste of mineral water. As such, one would naturally find it somewhat sweet after drinking. Therefore, there was no introduction of Family Spring's branding in their commercial, no mention of how clean their water is, nor how much better they are than the other brands out there. This is because there isn't a need for any of that. Just by using 'a rather sweet thing,' it covered all of those points!"

Carefully thinking about it, everyone gasped in realization of the message behind it!

A copy of a report with some figures was placed on the projector.

The director pointed at it. "I did a rough calculation of the sales and net profit for Family Spring. This is the miracle that Zhang Ye's ad has created over the past few days!"

Everyone was startled!

"That much?"

"This...this..."

"Their sales nearly doubled?"

The director said, "So do you all still think that those four words are not worth 60 million in total?"

The industry's professionals could only smile bitterly.

Worthy!

It was way too worthy of that sum!

The four words being valued at 15 million each was even sounding a little too low now!

The director looked at the people in the audience. "After the ad got an upgrade, there was an additional line in the advertising tagline saying that a cent would be donated to children in poor, rural areas for every bottle of water purchased. Zhang Ye can even think of that way to advertise? Is one cent a lot? What's the value of one cent these days anyway? Besides, that money wouldn't be contributed by Family Spring at all. They won't have to run those public welfare activities, just like the other major corporations that donate several million yuan to keep up their public image. In fact, Family Spring does not even have to fork out a single red cent. They're just using the money in the consumers' pockets to do charity. For every cent the consumers donate, it increases the profits of Family Spring. The greater the sales, the greater the donations, the more they earn. Zhang Ye is really too smart of a person, and he's really too good at this. This is not just some simple ad that he's made! You all think that it's simple because you all are not on the same level as Zhang Ye!"

Some people were taking notes.

Others were looking up and listening to the lecture in earnest.

Chapter 1244: The battle for the advertising field's top spot

At Tianxi Purified Water's headquarters.

The company's upper management called for an emergency meeting to discuss countermeasures on how to deal with Family Spring's domination of the market. There were looks of worry and anger on everyone's faces.

The issue had developed too quickly and they'd suffered a heavy loss in recent days. Their market share has fallen dramatically, and going by this trend, it meant their net profits for the year would fall drastically. This was something that they and their shareholders couldn't let happen. And the reason for all of this was not due to their product having a quality issue. Every other bottled water supplier was still selling the same products as before, but Zhang Ye's endorsement advertisement had created a shocking reversal of trends in the industry! The most depressing thing was that Zhang Ye's team had actually come knocking on their doors. They were even approached first as their company's endorsement deal was expiring. However, they felt that Zhang Ye's asking price was too high and thought that he didn't really have a good reputation, so they ignored it and did not even meet with them. Instead, they renewed Jiang Hanwei's contract as their celebrity spokesperson.

8 million RMB a year?

And you even want to call the shots on the advertising proposal?

Anything that we say will not be taken into consideration?

Do you think that you're an S-list celebrity!

Even an A-list big name like Jiang Hanwei was only asking for 3 million a year, and he was willing to do as they said and wouldn't order them around like Zhang Ye had wanted. Although that

decision put them in a rather complicated mood, they did not regret it.

"It has been so many days, haven't we thought of any ideas?"

"Family Spring's momentum is too strong!"

"We can't steal the market share away from them!"

"Zhang Ye's advertisement was too good!"

"Boss, what do we do now?"

"You're asking me? I should be asking you! Am I paying you all to do nothing? Our new ad will be on the air soon. Have you all thought of an advertising strategy yet?"

"We did, but none of them work."

At this moment, someone knocked on the door and came in.

"Boss, we've convinced her!"

"You've managed to convince her?"

"Yeah, she's downstairs."

"Quick, invite her in!"

"Boss, who is it?"

"Haha, Li Xiaoxiao has been headhunted by us."

"What?"

"That famous Ms. Li?"

"Wasn't she with BMW China?"

"She left that job."

"She's a god-tier person! A god-tier person of the advertising industry!"

Li Xiaoxiao, female, 32 years old.

—A legendary marketing planner of the advertising field. She handled over a dozen advertising accounts of medium to large

corporations in the country and had a proven track record that would amaze anyone. A lot of the advertisements she spearheaded were classics, and she was recognized as the best person in the advertising industry. Of course, that opinion was with the exclusion of Zhang Ye, who was not considered a professional in the industry.

Countless companies had tried to headhunt her, and even many overseas brands had thoughts of getting her to join them. She was a talented individual who was highly sought after by all in the world of advertising. Therefore, no one could understand why she would choose to join Tianxi Purified Water. They knew where their company stood, at least, and didn't think that their advertising director role would be more attractive than BMW China's. If they really had to come up with a reason, then there could only be one possibility!

She wanted to pit herself against Zhang Ye!

She wanted to compete in the same product market with Zhang Ye to determine who was better!

...

Two days later.

As the advertising industry was still worshiping and learning from Family Spring's advertisement, and just as Family Spring was continuing its expansion in the market, something unexpected happened!

Jiang Hanwei's commercial was broadcast on television!

"Six levels of filtration!

"Eight stages of processing!

"Eleven steps of purification!

"Tianxi, the clearest, purest water there is!"

On this day, Tianxi Purified Water came out crushing everything

in its path. The advertisement took only a day to boost Tianxi Purified Water's sales by a large extent all over the country. 10%, 15%, 20%, the sales kept climbing until it even rivaled that of Family Spring's!

This was too sudden!

So sudden that even the industry's personnel and Family Spring were stunned!

The advertising field burst into an uproar, but also simultaneously went crazy from the excitement!

"Who came up with Tianxi's ad?"

"It's amazing!"

"They broke down the purification process into numbers? That's had a great effect on the brand's image!"

"I heard from somewhere that it was Li Xiaoxiao!"

"What? It's her?"

"Aiyo, no wonder!"

"The number one goddess of the advertising field has defected to Tianxi?"

"Is she crazy? She could have taken her pick from so many of the other big companies that were after her!"

"Yeah, Tianxi doesn't seem to be the best choice for her to make."

"Unless she wants to try her hand at competing against Zhang Ye?"

"Oh damn, that might be possible!"

"How exciting! This is definitely something to keep our eyes on!"

"Quickly come and see, the gods of the advertising field are fighting! The two greatest gods have finally matched up!"

It was yet another phenomenal advertisement!

Normally, it was very difficult to have one phenomenal advertisement per year, so who could have expected that two such advertisements would make an appearance within the same week of each other? Further, these two advertisements were even for competing brands. This was truly something major!

Zhang Ye vs. Li Xiaoxiao?

The two gods of the advertising field were going to face off against one another?

Instantaneously, the excitement in the entire industry peaked!

"Who do you guys think will win?"

"I don't know."

"Li Xiaoxiao has the advantage. She's a professional."

"That's true. Zhang Ye's just someone who meddles around in every industry that he wishes to. But that's also an achievement in and of itself!"

"Going by results, Li Xiaoxiao has a lot of successful projects to her name."

"But going by effect, Zhang Ye's has had much greater success."

"Let's not blindly analyze this. We're not at that level yet, so it doesn't matter what we say here. Li Xiaoxiao has made her move, so let's just see how Zhang Ye will respond."

...

At Zhang Ye's Studio.

Family Spring's advertising team's manager and team members all came over.

"Teacher Zhang!"

"Have you seen Tianxi Purified Water's ad yet?"

"Please give us some ideas on how to deal with it!"

"The sales of Family Spring Bottled Water have already taken a hit!"

Taken a hit?

How was that possible?

Zhang Ye had been kept busy with work these few days and had too many things on his mind, so he didn't pay much attention to such matters. So he said, "Slow down, what are you talking about? Let me watch it first."

Ha Qiqi and the others came over and sit down.

When the advertisement played, Jiang Hanwei's figure appeared.

After watching, Ha Qiqi and the others were all secretly in awe of it. This advertisement was incredible!

Simple!

And back to the basics!

This was definitely not the work of just anyone!

Processing, purification, and many levels of filtration had been put forward, yet how many people would really understand the inner workings of such things? Was this really that difficult? In the water purification industry, how many were not able to achieve this? There could even be others who had a more complicated process than theirs. But that's just how advertisements worked. If you said so? Then people would believe you. Once the public saw it, they would think your purified water was the cleanest of them all and be very reassured. This was the power of advertising.

And it even looked a little familiar?

This commercial was just like Robust Co.'s 27* levels of filtration commercial back in Zhang Ye's previous world. The core message was essentially the same.

Zhang Ye looked up and smiled. "Who made this?"

Someone from Family Spring said, "Li Xiaoxiao, a godly person in the advertising field. This ad has impacted our sales greatly, so much so that the higher-ups are unable to sit still. They had us come over to look for you to see what you could do about it. Are we just going to compete normally, or will we fight back, or should we adopt a different strategy altogether? A lot of people in the industry are guessing that Li Xiaoxiao joined Tianxi because... because she wanted to challenge you!"

Challenge me?

Why would she challenge me!

Zhang Ye didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

It was very competitive in the advertising field!

This was a brutal war without smoke, fire, or blood. Everyone would pass each other by, and if you weren't careful, you might just suffer a terrible defeat. It was a place where only the best could survive!

In truth, Zhang Ye already had a "script" in place for Family Spring. Their sales were soaring, and even if Tianxi Purified Water were to come in to take a share of their market, it wouldn't do much to hurt Family Spring. Family Spring's branding had been built up, so it wouldn't matter even if they ignored them. At most, they would just sell fewer bottles of water and lose out on several tens of millions to hundreds of millions of yuan. Zhang Ye didn't have to bother himself with this at all. He had already done a great job for them, as well as fulfilled his part of the agreement with Family Spring.

But he didn't ignore it. He decided that he had to do something about this.

Li Xiaoxiao?

Challenging me?

If I don't respond to the challenge, wouldn't that be

uncharacteristic?

Alright then.

As you wish.

Chapter 1245: We're only the porters of nature!

The trend in the market for bottled water in recent days could only be described as ever-changing. At times, Family Spring's sales experienced a surge; at other times, Tianxi was pushing aggressively in the market. The two brands were going all out for their television commercials while fighting each other for the market share. It was like a close swordfight with sparks flying all around!

The common folk had headaches.

"Which one should I buy?"

"Both of them seem to be pretty good."

"Their commercials are being played all over the place."

"I still prefer Tianxi. It's cleaner since it goes through so many levels of processing!"

"Are you saying that Family Spring's water isn't clean?"

"It's not as clean as Tianxi's water."

"But Family Spring's water has a sweetness to it."

"They added sugar in it."

"Pfft, previous poster, please don't make me laugh."

"Zhang Ye and Jiang Hanwei are once again on opposing sides."

"Ah, I've only just realized it now that you mention it!"

"Those two have been fighting way before this. At Xiaodong's birthday party, Zhang Ye even crashed into his car on purpose. I even heard that Jiang Hanwei was chased away by Zhang Ye's female agent at the party? I wonder if that was true. Then, on King of Masked Singers, when Jiang Hanwei appeared on the show to support Flowing Time, he clashed with Zhang Ye again. And now

these two foes have met again. Is there a clash in their eight characters of birth? They keep ending up going against each other wherever they go? This time, they've been matched up in the ads that they star in!"

"Hahaha."

The people were only here to enjoy the show.

It was the industry insiders who really knew what sort of a level this contest was at. It was a matchup between Zhang Ye and Li Xiaoxiao, a competition between Family Spring and Tianxi Purified Water, and also a challenge between mineral water and purified water! Whoever was the number one person in the advertising industry would be revealed very soon!

At Tianxi's headquarters.

In the advertising department's office.

Li Xiaoxiao was seated, looking as confident as could be.

"Director Li, that was amazing!"

"The sales for yesterday have been released. They've increased by 20%!"

"We're gonna catch up to Family Spring soon!"

"With you here, everyone's feeling much more confident!"

"You're the true number one person in the advertising field! That's for sure!"

"Yeah, what is Zhang Ye anyway? He's just a broadcast host who hasn't learned anything about advertising, so how can he possibly compare to a trained professional like you!"

Everyone was in a good mood.

Li Xiaoxiao said calmly, "Don't be happy too early. Family Spring might still have some tricks up their sleeves. If they increase the promotion of their public welfare activities, or if they increase the

donation amount per bottle, we will use plan A to handle them. If they emphasize promoting the 'sweetness' of their water, we will execute plan B in response..."

There were four plans in total!

To handle every possibility they had worked out!

Li Xiaoxiao was very meticulous. Otherwise, she couldn't possibly be sitting in her current position. She had thought of everything that the opponent might try, then drew up plans to respond to each of them.

She was now waiting. She was waiting for Zhang Ye to make his move!

The advertising field was also waiting. They were waiting for the curtains of this grand battle to raise!

Jiang Hanwei also started updating his Weibo more frequently with promotional posts of him giving out Tianxi Purified Water to his celebrity friends!

...

The next day.

The sun was shining brightly.

The day was a peaceful one.

At 10 AM sharp, Family Spring started their commercial run on the television stations.

No one had expected that an advertisement that would soon be written into the annals of the advertising industry would appear so suddenly!

Quite a few industry insiders had gathered around anxiously to watch!

"It's here!"

"The new commercial is here!"

"Zhang Ye has made his move!"

"Quick, come and watch, it's beginning!"

"Let's see what he can come up with."

"I reckon there's nothing he can do."

The advertising field was watching.

The public was watching.

The people from the other brand name companies were also watching.

The commercial had changed!

In a valley.

In the woods.

There was a creek.

Ethereal music played.

Zhang Ye's voice slowly drifted out of the television.

"Water is the source of life.

"The quality of water dictates the quality of life.

"We don't produce water. We're only the porters of nature!"

The advertisement ended.

It was just a short 15-second spot.

Those who saw this commercial the moment it came on were dumbfounded. They could not react at all for a full few seconds!

"Holy shit!"

"This..."

"This commercial..."

"Oh my God!"

That classic advertising tagline of Tianxi Purified Water's

commercial had instinctively popped into their heads!

Processing?

Filtration?

Sifting?

Handling?

Purification?

But Family Spring just said, "No, we do not produce water, we're only the porters of nature!"

Face-smacking!

The ultimate kill!

A headshot!

This commercial was just too goddamn ruthless!

So this was Face-smacking Zhang!

This was that Face-smacking Zhang who had left countless fellow peers gnash their teeth in hatred of him!

...

At Tianxi's headquarters.

Everyone from the advertising department was speechless!

Li Xiaoxiao was stunned!

Tianxi's CEO had a shocked expression on his face!

There were even a few female employees whose eyes reddened as they started crying in distress. "They...they...How could they do that!"

"Director Li!"

"Director Li, what should we do?"

"This...this!"

Li Xiaoxiao looked at them and suddenly picked up pen and

paper. She lowered her head and started writing.

Everyone was filled with hope!

She still had a plan?

Right! We must fight back!

Director Li is the best advertising professional in the industry!

However, Li Xiaoxiao looked up and handed that piece of paper to the deputy CEO of Tianxi. Everyone panicked at what she said. "Sorry, I've lost. This is my resignation letter."

There was no plan at all!

They had nothing left up their sleeves!

This was checkmate!

This was a knife plunged into them in "extra time"!

They had no way of turning this around to counterattack!

...

Soon after.

News of Li Xiaoxiao stepping down from her position at Tianxi Purified Water spread throughout the industry. Everyone was extremely shocked and were finding it hard to accept or believe!

That was Li Xiaoxiao they were talking about!

A godly person who made her way through the ranks of the advertising industry!

"What's going on!"

"How did it turn out like this?"

"Holy shit!"

"I don't even know what to say!"

"Even Goddess Li couldn't slay him?"

"It would be acceptable to us if there's no one in the variety world

who can win against him, but there's even no one who can rival him in the advertising field? I really can't believe it! How can it be like this! If Li Xiaoxiao had fought Zhang Ye over the course of many rounds and they'd pushed each other to the limits before she conceded, I would probably be able to accept that. After all, they're both elites in the industry. But what about now? They only crossed swords once! Just that once!"

"Hai!"

"I'm kneeling!"

"Family Spring's commercial was simply too awesome!"

"Not only was it awesome, it was also goddamn face smacking!"

"Speaking from emotion, I'll definitely side with Li Xiaoxiao since she's my senior. But from a professional point of view, Family Spring's commercial was indeed incomparable. Just based on that advertising tagline alone, I'm convinced!"

"The waters of this industry run so deep."

"Yeah, after seeing these two gods clash, I realize that I still have a lot to learn!"

Just this single face-off!

Without even needing a second move from Zhang Ye, his opponent had already lost!

All because of that nuclear bomb of an advertising tagline: "No, we do not produce water, we're only the porters of nature!"

With just this simple tagline.

It made Li Xiaoxiao genuflect!

It made Tianxi Purified Water genuflect!

It made all the other brands of drinking water genuflect!

It made everyone in the entire Chinese advertising field genuflect!

They were all convinced!

So convinced that they could do nothing other than prostrate!

Chapter 1246: All the advertisements roll out!

The next day.

In the morning.

On the way to the studio, Zhang Ye received an unexpected call.

"Hello, who is this?"

"Hello, Teacher Zhang, I am Li Xiaoxiao."

"Li Xiaoxiao?"

"You might not know who I am."

"But Teacher Li, I do know you."

"I'm honored."

"Sorry about the advertisement issues. I was just entrusted with the duty since I receive pay from Family Spring, so I had to do my best."

"Teacher Zhang, you don't have to say that. If anyone has to apologize, it should be me. I was the one who threw down the glove, and the media was also guessing why I had suddenly joined Tianxi Purified Water. I can tell you right now that I did so because of you. I've long heard about you and was hoping to pit my skills against yours. The results have proven that Teacher Zhang is still a level higher. I've lost, and I've lost convincingly too. There's nothing else I can say to that."

"Teacher Li, you're too modest."

"Shall we have dinner some day you're free?"

"Sure, I would be more than happy to."

"Then it's agreed. I must really get some guidance from you, Teacher Zhang."

"You're too generous with your praise."

"Are your other ads going to roll out soon?"

"They'll be released throughout the day."

"Alright, I'll wait for them then. I quite anticipate them, actually."

Li Xiaoxiao was a big shot in the advertising field, so Zhang Ye was pretty polite when speaking to her. He knew that she was a very capable woman and had true skill to back her up. He never expected she would call him. She even spoke to him in a very calm manner and didn't confront him over the advertisement face-off between the two of them. A person of such character was surely going to gain the respect of Zhang Ye. She was not like him. Even if she said that she would like to get some guidance from him, Zhang Ye didn't dare think he could do so. He wasn't up to the task of dishing out advice to a big shot like Li Xiaoxiao. Because nobody here knew that Zhang Ye was actually the biggest porter in this world!

He wasn't a porter of water.

This guy would port anything he could!

...

At the studio.

Ring ring ring, ring ring ring.

The phone was almost blowing up from the constant calls! All kinds of endorsements had found their way here. There were thirty Chinese companies seeking a deal, and even three foreign ones approached them. This wasn't strange at all. Family Spring's advertisement had gotten really popular, and anyone with eyes could see why. Zhang Ye's reputation for his 15 million RMB per word had spread all over the industry. Even if the common folk could not see this, how could the major brands not notice?

"Director Zhang!"

"You're finally here!"

"This is the list of companies that approached us; take a look."

"There's really too many of them!"

"Are we going to accept their offers?"

Zhang Ye flipped through it and didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Accept their offers? Accept, my ass!

If he really took all of these projects, his schedule would be booked all the way until next year!

But with so many endorsement projects being offered to him, it was quite a pity not to take them. As such, the studio staff got busy again and started sifting through all the leads. Of the offers that could support the bottom line of their fifth step in the "Reach the Summit" plan, they selected three top corporations in the Chinese market and accepted their endorsement deals. As for the smaller enterprises and brands, Zhang Ye could only reject them for the time being. He really could not take those projects. Sometimes, it wouldn't be helpful to take too many endorsements since such deals were more about quality over quantity. Zhang Ye already had so many endorsements that not even the top three Heavenly Kings and Queens could beat him by combining their endorsement deals.

So that would be it. He would not be taking any more of them.

He would have to make do with the endorsements he had on hand.

After that, following Family Spring's advertisement, Zhang Ye's other endorsement advertisements were gradually released into the market!

...

On the same day.

In the Beijing subway.

The billboards on the waiting platforms were replaced.

A poster showed Zhang Ye holding a cell phone as he smiled while reading a book on it. Beneath him were several sentences making up the advertising message: "Reading a book is like reading oneself. The more you read, the better you understand yourself.

"I've taken a liking to a character because what he says reminds me of myself."

In the Shanghai subway.

"Reading a book is like reading oneself. The more you read, the better you understand yourself.

"Reading about and understanding the protagonist's every hesitation, I feel as though I can calmly make better choices at the crossroads in my life."

Shenzhen.

Tianjin.

Nanjing.

Every poster was different.

The passengers would all stop in their tracks as they passed by to read them.

Some passersby uploaded pictures of the advertisements online.

"Wow, Zhang Ye's new ad has arrived all over the subway stations!"

"Line 1 has fallen!"

"Line 5 has fallen!"

"It's everywhere in Line 13 as well!"

"It's even on the outdoor advertising light boxes!"

"Damn, Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen's subways have all been

invaded by Zhang Ye!"

"The guy's picture in the ad actually makes him look pretty classy. He really has the air of a man of culture."

"Extra, extra! Teacher Zhang has taken an endorsement for the number one reader app in the market!"

"This ad is pretty good. It's really quite classy!"

"Haha, I'll use this app to read my books from now on."

"I've just realized that Lord Zhang doesn't look that bad. In fact, he's looking more and more charming!"

The advertising world was very certain of one thing: Endorsing a reader app was extremely difficult. But Zhang Ye had managed to do it in a new and refreshing way. For such a boring and rigid thing like a reader app, Zhang Ye had managed to bring out the elegance and feel of a book. It raised the classiness of the reader app. Although this reader app's market share was already the top in the industry, that was just a statistic. Zhang Ye added a lot of value to the brand that it never had before!

And this value was precisely what money couldn't buy!

...

At night.

Beijing Television.

After the broadcast of an episode of a hit spy-thriller, a dairy commercial was shown.

It was a very gentle scene with a beautiful, scenic backdrop.

The blue sky overlooking the vast plains.

Zhang Ye, a piano, and a little girl.

A piano melody was playing in the background as Zhang Ye lovingly soothed the little girl.

There were no spoken lines. Right at the end of the commercial,

an advertising tagline appeared onscreen: "Not just any milk can be called Jiali Milk."

On Weibo.

This tagline was instantly mentioned everywhere.

"Pfft!"

"Such showmanship I give full marks!"

"Is it really that good?"

"It doesn't look bad!"

"It's so full of warmth. I'll give it a Like!"

"It's yet another classy commercial!"

It was shared like crazy!

It was parodied!

Everyone was having fun!

This commercial was very weird in a sense. Even those people in the advertising field who saw it could not figure out what made this advertisement so good after analyzing it for a very long time. There was just nothing in it that they could pinpoint as good. But the response of the market still let everyone know that this was yet another phenomenal marketing advertisement!

Because on this day, Jiali Milk was sold out all across the country!

The people were shocked and astonished.

"Fuck."

"I can't get it anymore!"

"Why are they out of stock?"

"I wanted to try it!"

"Is this milk really that good?"

"Whatever Zhang Ye endorses, it always ends up getting sold

out!"

"So impressive!"

"I'm utterly convinced!"

...

A picture of elegance.

The greenery of the grass.

A pure white wedding dress.

Zhang Ye was holding a woman's hand and putting a ring on her finger.

"A Diamond is Forever."

The jewelry commercial was rolled out.

A heated discussion took place on Weibo.

"Is Zhang Ye really getting married?"

"Who is that woman?"

"She can't be seen; they only showed her hand!"

"A second after I watched this commercial, I noticed my fiancée staring at me deeply and realized—the 100,000 RMB that I have left in my bank account is gone!"

"Zhang Ye, I hate you! My wife is now saying that she wants this brand of diamond rings! Your sister! The cheapest one-carat diamond ring already starts at the upper end of tens of thousands of yuan!"

"This commercial is too ruthless!"

"A Diamond is Forever? As a woman, I was instantly taken by that sentence! I will definitely buy this brand in the future when I get married!"

"This commercial is really too lethal on a woman!"

"My wife has fallen!"

"Ditto."

"Ditto +1!"

...

At a school.

In the laboratory.

There was a doctor.

And a microscope.

"You can wash away the visible stains.

"But can you wash away the invisible germs?

"Scientific research has shown..."

This was a commercial for a brand of soap!

It was inspired by Safeguard's soap commercial back in Zhang Ye's previous world.

It got boisterous again on Weibo.

"The fuck!"

"My hands are still so dirty even after I've washed them?"

"Is that really how it is?"

"I'm so scared that I quickly went to buy a box of it to wash my hands with!"

"Haha, luckily for me, I'm already using this brand at home!"

...

In a rather large bathroom.

A set of clean-looking sanitary ware was on display.

Zhang Ye's singing came on.

"Every single toilet is a hero.

"With just a simple flush,

"It can flush away all of your sorrows.

"No matter how much your pain,

"No matter how deep your loss,

"For you, it will take all of it away!

"Every single toilet is a friend.

"You can trust it with all your heart.

"You can't do without it in your life."

The sanitary ware commercial made its shocking debut!

This was the first time that Zhang Ye's new song was released in the form of a commercial. Moreover, there was also a full version music video commercial that could be viewed on the official website of the sanitary ware company and on the various major online video hosting sites.

When this commercial was rolled out.

The industry was dumbfounded!

The public was stunned!

"A toilet is a hero?"

"A toilet is a friend?"

"Laughing out loud!"

"Genuflecting to the thickness of Zhang Ye's skin!"

"A hero? Fuck, why don't you just present the toilet with a war medal! Why don't you just present the toilet with a Red-Banner Pacesetter award!"

"Hahahahaha!"

"I was really made to kneel to this commercial!"

"That was way too unconventional!"

"Just based on Zhang Ye's total lack of shame, I've got to buy one

of those!"

"My large saber is again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again unable to endure the thirst! Buy! Buy! Buy! Anything that Zhang Ye endorses, I'll buy!"

On this day, sales of the sanitary ware brand's products surged!

However, the most amazing thing was that this totally unconventional new song named "Toilet" that Zhang Ye had created actually managed to chart on the largest Top Chinese Music Chart in the country. It charted at number 10 for the day even though it was just a song for a commercial! At a time when I Am a Singer and Sing! were the most popular singing shows being broadcast, the daily top 20 spots on the chart were basically monopolized by songs that were performed on the shows. For a sanitary ware's commercial song to actually get into the top 10, just what kind of a concept was that? Even those from Beijing Television and Central TV nearly vomited blood when they saw the music charts!

What is this!

This fellow really has too many tricks up his sleeves!

One...

Five...

Ten...

One after another, the advertisements were dropped onto the public's consciousness like a carpet bombing run!

For the next few days, all of Zhang Ye's endorsement advertisements continued being shown!

Zhang Ye was appearing in all kinds of different styles and looks on television, in the subway, at the bus stations, on the online video hosting sites, etc. At different times, he would look refined

and suave, dashing, or charming.

The advertisements blew up!

The products sold out!

Zhang Ye's name was once again getting heard all over the country!

Chapter 1247: A sprint to the S-list!

On this afternoon.

His mother was munching on melon seeds while watching a television drama.

His father did not enjoy watching soap operas, so he sat beside her reading the papers.

Just as the television drama was getting exciting, the image onscreen suddenly switched. Zhang Ye's voice gently came from the television, "You can wash away the visible stains, but can you wash away the invisible germs?"

Wash, your sister!

How many days have they been showing this!

My skin is peeling from washing my hands so much!

His mother said in an impatient manner, "Why are they showing commercials at such an important moment!"

15 seconds went by very quickly.

Just as his mother was looking forward to the drama returning, Zhang Ye's face appeared again. "At important times! How can you catch a cold?"

Pfft!

His mother said, fuming mad, "Why is it another commercial!"

His father said with a smile, "Can't you watch something else then?"

So his mother changed channels to Zhejiang Television.

"A Diamond is Forever."

Change channels!

"There could be a gold bar inside when you open your Brain Gold

gift box!"

Change channels!

"Every single toilet is a friend...."

Change channels!

"Family Spring, a rather sweet thing."

Change channels!

"I Am a Singer is brought to you exclusively by our title sponsor, the leader in health products, Brain Gold..."

Advertisements!

Advertisements everywhere!

And coincidentally, every channel was currently showing the commercials with Zhang Ye in them during this time!

His mother got mad. "I'll just stop watching TV, will that do? I'll use the computer instead!"

As she spoke, she powered on the computer and launched the Internet browser, wanting to read some news. However, instead of reading the news, a pop-up appeared. Zhang Ye's smiling face appeared onscreen. "Our goal is—No! More! Tooth! Decay!"

No more tooth decay?

I'll beat you up until your teeth decay!

His mother went into his room angrily and dragged Zhang Ye out of bed. "Why is it all your ads?"

Zhang Ye said in a speechless manner, "Mom, I was sleeping."

"Get up! What are you still sleeping for?" His mother said, "When I turn on the TV, you're on it. When I power on the PC, you're on it again. You're on the cell phone browser pop-ups, you're there too when I'm taking the subway, just how many endorsements have you taken? Those who know will understand it's just ads, but those who don't will think that you've taken over the planet!"

Zhang Ye exclaimed, "Aiya, that's because the brand name companies have just renewed their endorsement deals and launched the new ad campaigns. They're definitely going to advertise harder and more frequently at the beginning. It's just going to be for a month or so since this is the only time that they can really build on their brand names. When they've established their brand's presence, the advertising frequency will surely drop. Enough, Mom, I'm not talking anymore. I've been so busy filming commercials these days, and when I can finally get some rest, you're shouting and keeping me awake. I'm going back to sleep now."

If even Zhang Ye's own mother was feeling this way, how would the public feel?

...

Online.

The netizens were all complaining!

"Your sister!"

"I'm going to have a mental breakdown!"

"Me too. The moment I switched on the TV this morning, I changed channels five times and every channel was showing fucking Zhang Ye's face on them. Oh my God!"

"This scammer!"

"Yeah, I keep seeing him wherever I go!"

"Zhang Ye has propped up half of the entire country's endorsement deals all by himself!"

"Half? You must mean all!"

"There really isn't anyone else who can get so much exposure like he is!"

"There shouldn't be any person in the country who doesn't know who he is, right?"

"That's right. I traveled back to my family home in the countryside two days ago. The moment I stepped into town, I saw a huge billboard that was newly built with the words 'Family Spring, a rather sweet thing' written on it. My place is just a small town, so I was really shocked to see that. Can you guys imagine how many grass mud horses galloped through my mind at that moment? This ad has spread into cities and villages across the country!"

"I've been seeing that commercial about having no tooth decay these days while watching the TV series on Shanghai TV. It always gets shown when they head into the commercial breaks. I've been forced to watch it more than 20 times already. I don't even have any tooth decay to begin with, but whenever I see that commercial, I can feel a fucking toothache in my mouth!"

"Hahahaha!"

"I'm cramping up from laughing!"

"Zhang Ye, that guy, has really angered the masses!"

But even if they scolded and shouted about this, the facts proved that even with this level of advertising intensity, the people were still able to accept it. Moreover, even if it wasn't Zhang Ye's commercials being shown at that time, it would still be impossible for the ad spots to stay empty. Some other commercials for some other brands would still be shown, so wouldn't it be all the same no matter whose commercial they were going to see? Further, every one of Zhang Ye's commercials was ingenious. There were profound ones, elegant ones, exquisite ones, brainwashing ones, and unconventional ones. If it was impossible to escape from the advertisements, then everyone would rather watch some interesting advertisements.

The ones who were kept the busiest were those in the advertising industry.

In recent days, the professionals in the advertising field were

holding meetings almost every day to study and research Zhang Ye's advertisements!

...

In a classroom.

"Here, everyone have a look at the projector. Let us talk about Zhang Ye's latest endorsement for the toothpaste product. We mentioned previously that we would be talking about the sanitary ware commercial today, but after we had a quick discussion about it after we went back yesterday, we've decided not to talk about that anymore. That's because it's a commercial that cannot be replicated at all, not even by Li Xiaoxiao. She doesn't know how to write songs, and neither would the professionals in the advertising field know how to write such songs. Since only Zhang Ye can make a commercial like that, we'll skip talking about it."

...

At a gathering in the advertising industry.

"Everyone, have a look at the information in your hands. Let's first analyze that diamond ring commercial of Zhang Ye's. 'A Diamond is Forever'—this advertising slogan is amazing!"

...

At a university.

In an upper-level advertising and marketing class.

"Students, we will not be referring to the textbooks today. Instead, let's talk about the ten endorsement ads of Zhang Ye's. If anyone told me in the past that there was a god in the field of advertising and marketing, I will definitely scoff at them. But today, I suddenly have some hesitations. If there really were a god in the world of advertising, then in this age that we live in, Zhang Ye is probably the one who is closest to it."

...

Zhang Ye's advertisements had created a huge commotion!

The common folks only wanted to watch the buzz, but those in the industry were all crazily researching and learning from the ads!

If the two Family Spring advertisements had awed them, then the series of Zhang Ye's advertisements that rolled out afterwards would make the entire industry go crazy over them!

The toothpaste advertisement?

The industry was knelt to it!

The cold medication advertisement?

The industry was knelt once more!

The toilet advertisement?

The industry fell to both knees!

The attitude of the advertising field towards Zhang Ye was no longer just admiration. It had turned into worship!

If he only occasionally came up with a classic advertisement, everyone wouldn't think much of it. That was because there would always be several such classic advertising and marketing cases every year. But to continuously come up with phenomenal advertisements one after another, and they were even for the most explosively marketed products in the industry, there were no other creatives who could do something like this, be it domestically or overseas!

It was only Zhang Ye!

Only Zhang Ye could achieve something like that!

...

The news was spreading all over!

"No more tooth decay has become a popular catchphrase!"

"An advertising slogan was all it took for a diamond ring to become the standard accessory for weddings!"

"Jiali Milk goes out of stock again!"

"Zhang Ye reaches the pinnacle of the advertising endorsement field!"

"Zhang Ye—The leader of this year's advertisement endorsements!"

"Zhang Ye's endorsement pay surpasses that of the S-list celebrities!"

A refreshing breeze in the advertising world!"

"Zhang Ye: Advertisements are also a form of art!"

"Is Zhang Ye's wedding date imminent?"

"Breaking insider's news: Zhang Ye currently preparing for his wedding!"

"Why is Zhang Ye's endorsement pay exceeding his market value? It's all down to those unique advertising proposals!"

"A brand name's evaluation of Zhang Ye: Zhang Ye is the most dedicated and professional celebrity in the industry. We are honored to be working with him!"

"Zhang Ye's advertisements 'flood' the entire country!"

"An exposure rate that defies the Heavens! Zhang Ye's popularity soars again!"

Everything was going smoothly!

With this, the "Reach the Summit" plan's fifth step was complete!

However, the next task was to return to step four and carry it out well—the recording of I Am a Singer. If luck would have it, he would very soon be able to make his first attempt at those seven spots of the S-list!

Chapter 1248: Xiaodong can't host anymore?

Wednesday.

Later that morning.

The barrage of advertisements finally came to an end. The volume of over a dozen of Zhang Ye's endorsement advertisements had finally normalized and were no longer shown as often as before. With that task complete and the popularity gained, Zhang Ye turned his attention back to I Am a Singer. In recent days, he had been too busy taking various endorsement deals and filming their commercials. That was too much of a distraction for him, so with that task complete, he had to get back to producing the show properly.

At Beijing Television.

Zhang Ye arrived at work.

"Director Zhang."

"Morning, Director Zhang."

"You're here already?"

"Have you eaten yet?"

"Director Zhang, do I get a discount for the diamond rings if I mention your name?"

The moment Zhang Ye came back, everyone was laughing and happily joking around with him.

The advertisements were also brought up by a lot of them. They teased him for a long time, but Zhang Ye didn't get angry and even played along with them.

Hu Fei also arrived at the office. "Director Zhang, you're here?"

Zhang Ye nodded and said, "Brother Hu, shall we start the

meeting?"

Hu Fei nodded. "Alright, is everyone here?"

Zhang Ye turned to Xiao Lu and said, "Go and gather everyone up."

"Got it." Xiao Lu obeyed.

Five minutes later, the conference room was fully seated with the staff of the program team. The new episode's recording was scheduled for tomorrow, and the program team would always hold a meeting prior to it so they could communicate any issues and establish a direction for the recording. This was standard practice here. The atmosphere in the meetings was always good, with Zhang Ye usually assigning the roles and tasks while Hu Fei would add on with whatever was necessary. Everyone else would take notes and record the meeting, have discussions, and raise questions while Zhang Ye answered them.

Today was no exception.

Zhang Ye said, "Everyone has been working hard these days. I Am a Singer's recording is already halfway done, and we've achieved very good results so far. Let's have a look at the projector. These are the viewership ratings for our show against Sing!'s after their broadcast time was changed."

I Am a Singer:

Episode Four's viewership rating: 3.08%

Episode Five's viewership rating: 3.22%

Episode Six's viewership rating: 3.19%

Sing!:

Episode Four's viewership rating: 1.58%

Episode Five's viewership rating: 1.62%

Episode Six's viewership rating: 1.55%

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "As all of you can see, Sing!'s viewership ratings have obviously gone up after they changed their broadcast time. 1.5% is a very outstanding result in the industry and would also deserve quite a good ranking in the all-time historical viewership ratings. But compared to us, they're still lacking by far. With them stepping aside, we don't have anyone competing with us in the same time slot. Our viewership for every episode is now at a stable 3% or above, but I think that we can still do better."

Hou Di said, "But, Director Zhang, we've already broken the record."

Xiao Lu clicked her tongue and said, "Take it even higher? Wouldn't that be very difficult? It feels like we're already at the limit."

However, Hu Fei replied, "In the past, no one thought that current TV variety shows could surpass the 2% mark. But Director Zhang did it. After that, when everyone thought that the 3% mark could not be broken, Director Zhang did it again. There has been a general consensus lately in the industry that 4% has to be the limit and that it is definitely the ceiling for variety shows. But I don't believe that's true. I'm of the same mind as Director Zhang on this; I feel that we can still take it even higher."

Hou Ge analyzed, "Then we can only seek to increase the excitement of the show. The audience is starting to become used to the rules and routine of our show, as well as getting familiar with the seven singers onstage, so they might be beginning to experience short-term fatigue with regard to our show. In the previous episode, we just completed a knockout round with the latest replacement singer getting eliminated immediately. He has a large fan base, so it actually affected our show quite a bit. As such, the viewership ratings for episode six were slightly weaker, even though it was still basically the same as episode five's viewership ratings. If we really want to push it another level higher, the

choice of the new replacement singer for the next episode will be critical."

Dafei said, "So who do we get for the replacement singer?"

Han Qi said, "We don't have that many options in our hands."

This was a difficult choice.

Who should they send first?

Who should they keep for later?

All these decisions had to be weighed carefully.

The singers on the current stage were divided into two tiers now.

The first-tier group: Chen Guang, Zhang Xia. This was the most solid group, and the two of them were consistently ranked in the top three. They were truly excellent singers. Xiaodong could probably be considered as part of the first-tier group as well since she also occasionally got rather good results. But that was still rather dependent on the songs she sang. She was not exactly solid in this area.

In the second-tier group, there were Huang Cheng, Zhao Wuliu, and Amy. Huang Cheng was someone who went by the artistic route, so the style of his songs was more niche. During the episode he first joined as the replacement singer, he got a very good ranking. However, his later songs only received lukewarm responses, with his results fluctuating. Like him, Zhao Wuliu's results were also very rocky, with him ranking high at times and low at other times. This was not a problem with their singing but because there were too many good singers on this stage. Everyone were bringing out their best tricks as they fought each round with their all, so the results were more across the board. It was really difficult to pinpoint who was better than the other.

Surprisingly, Amy was the most solid performer of all. He steadiness came from the fact that she was always ranked in the last two places, either sixth or seventh. Every time she was faced

with the knockout round, she would always be the one in the most danger. However, she was always able to return from the dead and survive to the next round. As such, after three knockout rounds so far, Amy was still around even though she was part of the starting list of singers for the show. As the show progressed, this also became a highlight of the show that the viewers were delighted to see.

Hu Fei gave it some thought and said, "For the new replacement singer, we will require a truly skilled singer. I hope that this replacement can break into that first-tier group and create some competition for the others."

Zhang Ye nodded. "That's what I feel too. Looking at the list of replacement singers, I would probably be more inclined to..." As he was speaking, a phone rang. It was Zhang Ye's cell phone. He had forgotten to silence his phone and did not intend to answer it since they were in a meeting. But just as he was about to reject the call, he saw the caller ID and was slightly taken aback. He really had to answer this call, so he said, "Sorry, I'll have to take this call."

Hu Fei said, "It's fine."

He exited the conference room.

Zhang Ye pressed the answer button and said: "Hello."

It was Wu Zeqing's secretary, Bai Li, on the other end.

"Teacher Zhang, are you busy?"

"It's OK, Secretary Bai, just speak."

"There's something that I need to give you a heads up on. Chief Wu is currently in a meeting and can't get away, so she got me to give you a call. Someone has reported your show."

"A report? Who?"

"It should be someone from Central TV Department 1."

"What was the report about?"

"That you've appointed an amateur host for the show."

"You mean Xiaodong?"

"Yes."

"That's just a guest role. She only has a couple of lines and shouldn't really be considered the show's host, right?"

"Strictly speaking, that is indeed not allowed. There's an article that was issued by the SARFT that prohibits an unlicensed host from hosting a show. It's just that this rule wasn't so strictly applied back then and was always something that we turned a blind eye to. Furthermore, the definition of 'host' is not that clear."

"Yes, I do know about that article."

"But the execs are watching this very closely because someone has reported you all. With the article brought up, Chief Wu can't really do much about it either. Because of your show getting too popular these days, the higher-ups are more cautious about how to handle it. They're currently holding a meeting to sort it out, but be prepared. The outcome should likely be decided by today, although it's already definite that I Am a Singer will no longer be allowed to have a guest in the host role. You'll probably have to change it."

"But we'll be recording tomorrow."

"Hai, I know."

"Is there really no room for discussion?"

"There isn't any. If there were, with the good relationship you and Chief Wu enjoy, do you think that she wouldn't speak up for you all?"

"Alright then, I understand. Thanks, Secretary Bai."

"You're welcome, Teacher Zhang."

After hanging up, Zhang Ye felt rather speechless. He understood quite well that this matter was indeed going to be difficult to handle. If the article had not been passed yet, Old Wu could

certainly veto its passage. Or at least, she would be able to delay it until after I Am a Singer was finished since there weren't even that many episodes left to record anyway. But the problem was that the article already existed. It had been passed a year ago, although it hadn't been enforced and there were also no precedents. But they had been reported on now, and the whistleblower was even Central TV Department 1. Importantly, the head of Central TV was a party member of the SARFT. Even if he was not higher ranked than Old Wu, he was still a member of the SARFT's Party Committee. He still had the right to speak against some issues and would be able to use the article to make sure this issue did not get ignored.

Blame me!

If only I had considered this more carefully beforehand!

In the meeting room.

Zhang Ye returned.

Hu Fei said, "Let's carry on then."

But Zhang Ye said to the others, "Let's adjourn the meeting."

Everyone was stunned.

"Adjourn?"

"Why?"

"What happened, Director Zhang?"

Zhang Ye did not say anything to them but told Hu Fei, "Brother Hu, let's go to your office."

Hu Fei immediately knew that something must have cropped up, so he quickly left with Zhang Ye and headed back to his office.

In the office.

Zhang Ye said sternly, "I've just received news that Xiaodong cannot host the show without a 'license.'"

Hu Fei was surprised. "Where did you get the news from?"

"The SARFT." Zhang Ye said, "It was Central TV Department 1 that reported us. It seems the program team of Sing! hasn't admitted defeat yet, nor are they willing to take it lying down. We've already forced them to change their broadcast time, so now that they've managed to find something against us, they'll definitely try to counterattack and take us on again!"

Hu Fei said heavily, "Then what do we do now? How are we going to carry on with the recording tomorrow?"

Zhang Ye sighed. "I'm still thinking about it."

Hu Fei said, "Why don't I try to get the Station Head to talk to them?"

"That won't work." Zhang Ye shook his head. "Is our Beijing TV more powerful than them?"

Hu Fei said, "Or we can let Dong Shanshan take over the hosting role."

Zhang Ye said, "How can she? She still has the role of the host-manager to handle."

"Then let me get a host from the station."

"That won't do either, it's too abrupt. The original direction of the show was for it to have no outsiders and only for the singers to host it themselves and also perform. The viewers are used to that, and at the same time, it's our selling point for the show. If an unfamiliar face were to suddenly come in and take over the hosting as a professional host, even if we can carry on with the show's recording, what of the show's effect? The effects are going to be really bad, and then what of the viewership ratings? Will we still be able to aim for 4% if we do that? Our show's reputation will surely drop as well!"

Hu Fei said anxiously, "But there's no more time, we're recording tomorrow!"

Chapter 1249: What are you all looking at me for!

That same day.

There were still ongoing discussions about I Am a Singer on Weibo.

"They're going to record the seventh episode soon!"

"I'm really looking forward to it!"

"It was such a pity that He Huan got eliminated."

"Yeah, the results of the fourth episode were really too unexpected."

"Has the next replacement singer been revealed yet?"

"Not yet, no one knows who it is."

"I'm always most anxious to find out who the next replacement singer is after every knockout round."

"This show is a blast! Zhang Ye is really fucking amazing!"

"I Am a Singer's viewership ratings are through the roof. Sing! has completely been dismantled."

"Hurry up and get the new episode out. I can't wait anymore."

"Hahaha, let's see if Amy will get eliminated in the new round!"

"Amy is truly an undying goddess!"

"Pfft, everyone is always saying that she'll be eliminated soon, but she always manages to stay alive!"

"There's not going to be another show as awesome as this in the entire history of variety shows!"

It was trending #1 on Weibo, was the top searched term, and the songs performed on it filled the Top Chinese Music Chart! Counting all of the variety shows in recent years, there was really

none that was more popular than I Am a Singer. The Voice was not, A Bite of China was not, King of Masked Singers was not, and Sing! was even more not so.

But at this moment.

The SARFT issued a shocking announcement!

—After investigating a report, Beijing Television's I Am a Singer was found to have flouted the rules of using a non-professional host according to Article 21. They are required to rectify this immediately, and all unlicensed hosts will be prohibited from taking any hosting roles on any variety shows moving on.

The announcement was very long, but that was the gist of it.

The SARFT was penalizing I Am a Singer!

At the same time, it was also sending out a warning to all the other variety shows in the industry!

With that, all the people in the country were alarmed!

"What?"

"Heavens! Immediate rectification?"

"So does that mean the show will be taken off the air?"

"How's that possible!"

"I know about that regulation! There was indeed something like that!"

"But why has it been fine until now? All the other shows were untouched?"

"Didn't you read what they said? Someone made a report! They got stabbed in the back!"

"Damn, do they have nothing better to do?!"

"Needless to say, it must be Sing!'s program team who made the report!"

"It's over, they're gonna get taken off the air!"

"Surely not, right? I love this show so much!"

...

Central TV Department 1.

Many of the people here went crazy at the news!

"Ha?"

"Immediate rectification?"

"Hahaha, serves them right!"

"This is such good news!"

"If their show gets suspended, our Sing!'s viewership ratings can definitely break 2%! It might even go higher than that!"

"This is what you call retribution!"

"We can finally enjoy seeing them in a predicament!"

"Hurry up and suspend them already!"

"They might not get taken off the air, but that should be enough to throw a spanner in the works."

"If they don't handle it well, their viewership ratings will surely drop like crazy."

...

At Beijing Television.

It was very chaotic.

Zhang Ye was on the line with Old Wu, who had just gotten out of her meeting. He brought up a suggestion to use loopholes to get past the order since something like that had worked in his previous world. "Old Wu, if we register Dong Shanshan as the host for our show, but only in name, and then continue letting the singers host in their capacity as guests or participants, would it work?"

"I'm afraid not."

He raised several more suggestions but all were rejected.

In the end, Zhang Ye felt rather hopeless when he realized that there were no loopholes that he could take advantage of. Or to be precise, he was left without any loopholes to take advantage of as everyone at the top had it in for him and his team.

Over there.

The calls also arrived one after another for Zhang Ye.

Xiaodong asked: "Zhang'er, what's going on?"

Zhang Ye said: "It is exactly what you see."

"So I won't be hosting for this upcoming episode?"

"Yeah, we're trying to think of ways to minimize the impact of this."

Zhang Xia also called.

"Little Zhang, are we going to be taken off the air?"

"No, that's not going to happen."

"Then what does the immediate rectification mean?"

"It's just on the matter of the hosting issue. I'll be able to handle that."

"Alright, it's been hard on you. Are we still going ahead with tomorrow's recording?"

"Of course. Everyone should prepare for recording per usual. We'll start at the agreed upon time after everyone is finished rehearsing. Nothing will be affected, don't worry."

"Alright."

Although Zhang Ye was telling everyone not to worry, the participating singers were still very worried. He was reassuring everyone but had not yet thought of a way to solve the problem.

Beijing Television was also trying their best to pull relations and

even the Station Head had seemingly gone over to the SARFT and stayed there for a full two hours before stepping out. Later on, she didn't even say anything after she got back, so it could be assumed that there was not much hope. Even if Beijing Television was quite a major station, they did not exactly have much power or authority to speak of.

The singers were all waiting.

The industry was also waiting.

They were all waiting to see how Beijing Television would handle this.

I Am a Singer's program team was cursing and swearing now.

Xiao Lu shouted, "They better not let me find out which bastard made the report!"

Dafei said in a rage, "This is too sinister! They're so vicious!"

"Why couldn't they have just worked and improved on their own show? Why must they pull others down with them? Do they really think that if our show dies, their show could step up?" Hou Ge also said angrily, "It wasn't easy to have a variety show that could surpass 3% of the viewership in China. We haven't even managed to make a name for ourselves overseas and have already been backstabbed by one of our own!"

Han Qi scolded, "Villains!"

The program team's staff were all really mad!

Hu Fei said anxiously, "The deadline is tomorrow. Let's think of a way to deal with this first!"

So far, it looked like Zhang Ye was the one who was the most tolerant. It wasn't because he was big-hearted, but that he had been through too many of such incidents before. What kind of situation had he not seen before? There were many more incidents that were even more serious than what had just happened. So he

said, "Yes, listen to Brother Hu. Everyone, calm down and try to think of a something first."

Xiao Lu said dejectedly, "There's nothing that we can do. If we bring in a new host, it will affect the show's quality. The singers we have don't have hosting licenses either, so they can't take the stage role. What options are we left with?"

Hou Ge said, "Yeah, if we don't want to affect anything and keep making the show as before. Unless the replacement singer for this week can host as well, we could let him do it. But wouldn't that be too far-fetched? Those singers who can sing well in the music industry are all professional singers. Like they'd have a hosting license as well! Why would they go and take the test to get a hosting license? Do they have nothing better to do? And even if we get a host to cross over, their singing won't be good enough for them to take to stage. So that's where the problem lies. There isn't anyone so wondrous that they would have both a hosting license and be a professional singer at the same...."

Hou Ge suddenly went quiet.

The entire program team office fell silent!

Hou Ge was stunned as he slowly turned around to look at Zhang Ye.

Hu Fei blinked several times and turned his head in the direction of Zhang Ye as well.

Xiao Lu looked over.

Han Qi looked over.

Dafei looked over.

Hou Di looked over.

Everyone was staring at Zhang Ye and did not say anything. They just kept looking at him.

Zhang Ye was dumbfounded!

What the heck!

What are you all looking at me for!

Zhang Ye flatly refused, "No! Absolutely not!"

No one said a thing as they continued looking at him.

Zhang Ye nearly fainted then and there. "Don't you all even think about that! It is absolutely impossible!"

Chapter 1250: Ah, I've been hacked again!

The atmosphere within the program team turned very strange. Everyone's gaze was now on Zhang Ye and their eyes had a weird and subtle look to them.

A professional singer?

One who had a professional host license?

There really was someone as wondrous as that!

And he was sitting right in front of them!

That's right! How could that have slipped their minds!

Hu Fei finally spoke, "Director Zhang, why don't we have a meeting?"

Zhang Ye immediately put his hand up. "I'm not going to have a meeting. Don't even think about it, Brother Hu!"

Hou Ge said eagerly, "Director Zhang, I think it's better to have the meeting."

Zhang Ye didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Why should we have a meeting? I'm telling you now, you guys are barking up the wrong tree. You guys are really barking up the wrong tree! Do you guys think that I'm superhuman? Do you really think that I can split myself up into that many of me?"

"But there's really no one else that we can choose from." Xiao Lu blinked.

Zhang Ye said, "Our country lacks everything but people."

Dafei said, "But a professional singer who also has a host license, there really isn't anyone other than you."

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "Impossible!"

Hu Fei coughed and said, "There really isn't."

Han Qi nodded in confirmation. "Yes, there's only you."

Hou Di added, "Whether locally or abroad, you're the only one."

Zhang Ye was speechless.

Hu Fei came over. "Director Zhang, let's chat."

"I'm not going to chat with you." Zhang Ye quickly said, "There is no room for discussion."

Hu Fei pretended to be heartbroken as he said, "Our show is facing such a difficult time, so how can you bear to stand there and do nothing? This isn't the Director Zhang I know."

Zhang Ye pointed at his own chest. "Don't say that. This is who I am and who you know, don't doubt that."

Hu Fei had no reply.

Han Qi also tried to persuade him. "Just do it, Director Zhang. With your skill, which of the other singers are your equal?"

Your sister!

Aren't you thinking too highly of me!

"Any of them can be my equal!" Zhang Ye said, "Grandma Zhang, Old Chen, Sister Dong, Old Huang, which of them are not top singers in the music industry? So why would I participate in the competition? I already said it clearly at the start: I will never participate in the competition. Besides the issue of capability, I'm also not allowed to take part in it. If I lose, my popularity will definitely drop. If I win, the show's popularity will definitely drop. I'm the executive director of the show and I oversee everything on I Am a Singer. From the rules to the voting process, all of those were planned and decided by me. As the guy who wrote the rules, even if I went on stage and competed, there's nothing to be proud of if I win. The viewers would definitely say that it was corrupt. So I'd be in a really difficult position since I'm neither allowed to win nor lose. So tell me, how can I possibly participate in the competition?"

Hu Fei exclaimed, "We have to take it one step at a time, so let's get this issue resolved first."

Zhang Ye had almost gone crazy. He facepalmed and said, "Alright, even if I join against my will, I only have one head and one pair of hands. Oh, and I also have to oversee the entire show's planning as the executive director, announce the rankings, practice and rehearse the song, and compete as well." He stared with wide eyes and said, "Even if I grew another head and pair of limbs, they wouldn't be enough to do all that! Are you guys trying to exhaust me to death?"

Hu Fei smacked his lips and said, "Can't you put in some overtime?"

Zhang Ye said, "How is this putting in overtime? You're asking me to put my life on the line!"

Xiao Lu begged, "Teacher Zhang."

Zhang Ye said firmly, "I won't join."

"Teacher Zhang."

"Director Zhang."

"We're depending on you."

"There's no one other than you."

"Director Zhang."

"Please put in some overtime, please."

Everyone chimed in and kept begging him.

Zhang Ye was getting dizzy from hearing everything they had to say. He had joined a singing show before. Back on King of Masked Singers, it was he who put on a mask to participate anonymously and knew how it felt to be a contestant. That feeling of having no appetite because of the pressure, having to practice his songs over and over every day, having to change the song at the last minute due to being unsuitable, and then being required to rearrange the

musical arrangement as a result, the rehearsals, and sound testing, there had never been a day where he could sleep soundly while competing on King of Masked Singers!

But now?

As the executive director?

The overall planner?

The vote counter?

The host?

And they still wanted him to become a contestant?

Are you guys fucking asking me to do everything?

Zhang Ye was having none of it. In fact, he got even angrier at Central TV Department 1. Fucking hell!

...

At night.

On Weibo.

"There's reliable info that it was Central TV Department 1 who made the report!"

"Are you serious?"

"I have a classmate working at the SARFT, so I'm sure of it!"

"Damn, I knew it had to be them!"

"They're too wicked!"

"Yeah, the thing is, Central TV Department 1 also used unlicensed hosts for two of their shows at the beginning of the year! So they can do it? But others aren't allowed to? What do you call that? It's obviously a double standard! So how could they report on others? They're using the authorities to slap their enemies? This is using public resources for their own gains!"

"They make me so angry!"

...

Central TV Department 1.

Everyone had gotten off work and were still talking about the matter on the way out.

"Was it really us who reported them?"

"I think so."

"Haha, well played."

"Let's see what I Am a Singer can do about it."

"How much do you think our viewership ratings will increase by?"

"If they really get taken off the air, we should be able to gain an increase of 1%, at least."

...

And right at this moment, a Weibo post from Zhang Ye sent shockwaves around the country!

Zhang Ye's Weibo: "Dropping a notice here for everyone. To comply with the SARFT's rectification request, there will be some changes made to I Am a Singer's time slot."

The day.

And broadcast time.

Were exactly the same as Sing!'s!

The industry exploded!

"Holy shit!"

"Has Beijing TV gone mad?"

"They're gonna broadcast at the same time again?"

"Looks like the fight is on! They're back at it again!"

"Hot damn! Beijing TV is so domineering!"

"This is Zhang Ye's reply to them!"

"Hahahaha, Central TV Department 1 is gonna cry!"

"They'd just managed to avoid I Am a Singer, but Beijing TV has come chasing after them again?"

Elsewhere.

Central TV Department 1 also blew up!

The calls were going out one by one!

"Hello, Boss?"

"Come back quickly!"

"Ah? Back where?"

"Back to the office, where else! Immediately!"

Many of those who had already knocked off from work were asked to come back to the office!

Then, when they found out that I Am a Singer was again going to broadcast at the same time as them after arriving back at the office, all of them paled!

"How is that possible!"

"Zhang Ye, that madman!"

"He's always been a madman!"

"Is he thinking of taking us down with him?"

"Aren't they going to continue aiming for the viewership ratings record? If they start broadcasting at the same time as us, true, I'll admit that we have more to lose, but they won't get away unscathed either. Then they won't have any more chances of breaking the viewership ratings record! That's totally not worth it. Anyone with half a brain would not do it like this! How can Beijing TV allow Zhang Ye to behave so recklessly? Even if they allow it, the advertisers would not take such a loss!"

"But Zhang Ye is really capable of doing something like this!"

"Right, you cannot determine what he'll do by using logic!"

"It's over! We're done for this time!"

"I Am a Singer was instructed to fix their problems immediately. They probably couldn't come up with any other way to deal with it, so they didn't want us to have it easy either! They'd rather we suffer along with them! And have everyone die together?"

"That fucking hooligan!"

"Zhang Ye is really such a goddamn hooligan!"

Everyone was running around like a chicken with its head cut off!

Especially the program team staff of Sing! They were nearly in tears!

It was starting again!

This nightmare called Zhang Ye had returned again!

Soon after, several key executives of Central TV Department 1 also returned to the office in a panic. They immediately called for an emergency meeting.

Jiang Yuan.

Jiang Naixiong.

Several of the directors were cursing and swearing at Zhang Ye during the entire meeting. They were all very familiar with Zhang Ye as he had spent a long time at Central TV Department 1. After such a long time, that fellow was still that same old bastard he was before!

The key personnel of Sing!'s program team moped. After the meeting, they immediately carried out the executives' instructions and reorganized some of the tasks for the new episode's recording. They could no longer do it as they had done before. There had to be some changes made so that their show could get a boost. Only in

this way could they take on Zhang Ye's rage and not die too ugly a death for the coming episode. Along with those changes, they also began preparing themselves for another change in the broadcast time. But that was not the best way out. The previous change to their broadcast time had already taken them a great deal of effort to convince the higher-ups of the station. So if they were to change it again? That would really be too troublesome. Even if they applied to get it changed, it might not be approved. They couldn't always be the ones having problems like this!

But they still gave some foreshadowing of what to expect on their official website.

Before long, Sing!'s official Weibo posted: "Due to technical difficulties, Sing! does not rule out changing its broadcast time in the near future. We would like to remind everyone to stay updated with the latest news on our official website."

The netizens were stunned.

"Pfft!"

"Changing the broadcast time again?"

"They're changing it again?"

"Sing! is terrified again!"

It was very chaotic at Central TV Department 1!

Calls!

Overtime!

Meetings!

Discussing plans!

The industry was also alarmed by Beijing TV's decision!

However, the development of the matter did not turn out as everyone thought!

One hour after Zhang Ye's post on Weibo, and just as Central TV

Department 1 had descended into chaos, even to the point that someone was already meeting with the higher-ups regarding another change to the show's broadcast time, and with Zhang Ye getting pushed into the trending searches and his Weibo post making it into the Weibo headlines, the post was suddenly deleted by him.

After that, he posted again.

Zhang Ye's Weibo: "Ah, I've been hacked again. The show's broadcast time won't be changed. Please do not believe the rumors, everyone. Go by your own judgment. Changing the broadcast time of a show is a very complicated process. We'd have to submit it to the station and the SARFT to get it approved before it takes effect, so how can we possibly just change it as we wish?"

Hacked?

Rumors?

The public was dumbfounded!

The industry was dumbfounded!

Central TV Department 1 was dumbfounded!

Someone at Central TV did not believe this and immediately called a friend at the SARFT.

"Hello, Old Xu!"

"What's the matter?"

"Did I Am a Singer change their broadcast time?"

"Change what time?"

"Didn't they submit an application for it?"

"An application for what? What are you talking about?"

"I....()%...%\$##@@!!!"

It was very clear now!

Central TV Department 1's people were all left cursing at someone's ancestors!

Zhang Ye!

Fuck your grandpa!

You're too fucking wicked!

When the netizens realized the truth, they were rolling on the floor in laughter!

"Aiyo, holy fuck!"

"Hahahahaha!"

"I can't take this anymore, I'm crying laughing!"

"Zhang Ye is such a trickster!"

"What a fucking bastard he is!"

"Hacked? Your sister! Only a fool would believe you!"

"Sing!'s program team has suffered a huge loss of face this time!"

"Yeah, I heard that everyone went back for overtime in preparation of taking on this formidable enemy. They even rushed out an application to the higher-ups to change their broadcast time. But in the end, they just got pranked by Zhang Ye!"

"This move by Zhang Ye is way too wicked! But it was so beautiful at the same time!"

"Yeah, to deal with such people, it's better to act more bastardly!"

"Only Zhang Ye can come up with such trickery! If it were anyone else who attempted that, they would surely be scolded to their graves and simultaneously offend the entire industry. Only Zhang Ye could come out of something like that unscathed, since everyone already knows what kind of a person he is! Besides, he doesn't have any more people that he can offend. Everyone who can be offended has already been offended!"

"My wife and I are laughing so hard!"

"What a comedian!"

"Things would get really boring without him in showbiz!"

"The funniest thing is that this fella even put on a show. He told everyone not to go around spreading rumors and go by their own judgment of things. Aiyo, my dearest Teacher Zhang, can you not be so hysterical?"

Quite a few netizens were praising him!

A lot of people in the industry were at their wits' end because they were angered to the point of laughter!

This weirdo!

This jokester!

This hooligan!

Holding the sun, the moon, and the stars in the palm of his hand!

There really was no other person like him in this world!

Chapter 1251: The replacement singer makes his appearance!

The next day.

On the day of the recording.

In the morning at Beijing Television.

"Eh, where's Director Zhang?"

"I don't know."

"He was around a bit ago."

"Brother Hu, Director Zhang fell asleep backstage."

"Director Zhang didn't sleep all night."

"Aiya, the audience is already here. Tell him to persevere and work some overtime."

"Alright, I got it. I'll go and wake up Director Zhang then."

The audience had already been admitted into the studio.

The singers were all standing by.

Only the director was not here yet.

Zhang Ye got woken up, then forced himself to go wash and freshen up with some cold water. When he came out, he bumped into Xiaodong and Amy in the corridor as they came over to greet him.

Xiaodong asked, "Can you save the show?"

Zhang Ye nodded. "I've handled it."

Amy gave him a look. "Director Zhang, you're so bad. I saw your Weibo post yesterday, hahahaha. Central TV Department 1 must hate you to the bone!"

Zhang Ye laughed, "I got hacked."

"Yi!" Amy jeered.

A ways away, Zhang Xia spotted the three of them while heading to the bathroom.

Zhang Xia came over and asked, "Little Zhang, has the replacement singer arrived yet?"

Zhang Ye answered, "I suppose so."

"Who is it?" Amy immediately asked.

Zhang Xia also asked curiously, "Do I know who it is?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Probably."

Xiaodong said, "What about me?"

"You probably know too," Zhang Ye said.

He didn't disclose much and quickly turned to head back to the front to get back to work.

Half an hour later.

The studio was packed and the audience was deep in discussions.

"Did you guys see Weibo yesterday?"

"I did, hahaha, it made me laugh my ass off!"

"Zhang Ye is itching for a beating! That was so ruthless!"

"He's a total quack."

"But that was such an outlet. Central TV deserved it for starting the fight."

"That's right. I wonder how I Am a Singer will turn things around today. The singers can't host anymore, right? Who will do it then? Dong Shanshan? Zhang Ye?"

"Who knows? But if they do it that way, the rules will have to be changed."

"I still prefer having the singers host."

"Yeah. If they change the rules now, it'll affect the viewership ratings."

"The issue is that everyone's gotten used to the singers guest hosting the show. It's been ingrained into the minds of the viewers."

Onstage.

The band was in position.

The staff were in position.

Counting down:

Three.

Two.

One.

Recording began!

The audience was already intently staring with wide eyes, wanting to see just how the show would deal with the change. Then they saw a person holding a microphone walking onstage from below. Cries of surprise rang out. Everyone was taken aback, with some of them laughing loudly. In an instant, everyone stood up and applauded thunderously!

It was him!

It was indeed him!

The singers backstage were also quite happy.

Zhang Xia said with a smile, "In the end, it's still Little Zhang hosting."

Chen Guang said, "I coulda guessed. It was either gonna be him or Dong Shanshan."

Xiaodong said happily, "He's both the executive director and the host. It's so hard on Teacher Zhang."

Zhang Ye stood onstage. He smiled and said, "Hello, everyone. Welcome to the stage of I Am a Singer, brought to you exclusively by our title sponsor, the leader in health products, Brain Gold. I am your host for today, a host with a 'license' to 'operate.' I've been awarded the highest honor in the hosting world—I'm a true blue and legal host. Oh, some of you might be curious about where Sister Dong has gone? Well, Sister Dong is illegal and had been reported to the authorities by someone. She's currently busy trying to get a host license."

"Pfft!"

"Hahaha!"

Laughter rang out in the audience.

This guy! He doesn't forget to get the jabs in when he comes on!

Zhang Ye continued, "So when Sister Dong found out that I'm the standin host today, she specifically came to look for me and repeatedly reminded me about one thing. She told me that I must let everyone know about this. As it's a very important matter, can those of you with a pen please note it down?"

Everyone was stunned.

What was it?

What was so important?

Everyone pricked their ears up.

Zhang Ye cleared his throat as his expression changed. Suddenly, he spoke speedily, "Thank you to the leading health supplement brand, Brain Gold Company, for being the title sponsors of our show. Thank you to Hubei Pharmaceuticals' strong support for us. If you're going to use a tablet, use Lilai's eight-inch tablet with multi-core technology. Honey Sweet fruit juice, so sweet that you can feel it in your heart!"

The audience burst out laughing!

Was that it?

This was what you meant by something important? Your sister!

Wasn't that just the fucking advertisements!

The singers backstage were also laughing hard, especially Xiaodong. While not knowing whether to laugh or cry, she was also quite impressed. She suddenly thought that the SARFT's issued article was not without reason. Seeing Zhang Ye's hosting and looking at her own hosting, there was obviously a gulf in their styles. That was the difference between a professional host who had won the Golden Microphone Award and a guest host like her. Be it the rhythm, humor, adaptability, enunciation, or stage control, she was still lacking by too much.

These lines by Zhang Ye fired up the audience!

Zhang Ye calmly said, "So then, let us get today's competition started. Today's first performer will be the replacement singer for this week, so let's hand the stage over to him."

Applause sounded.

Backstage, the singers all stuck out their necks in wait. Who could it be? Was it an old friend? They were all hoping that it wouldn't be someone too strong, because the people who were performing on this stage were already great singers.

The audience also turned to face the moon gate.

Who was it?

Why couldn't they see anyone?

But there were also some people in the audience who weren't paying attention.

"They changed the rules in the end."

"Yeah, what else could they have done?"

"Hai, Central TV Department 1 is really too wicked."

"Let's just keep watching."

"Yeah, Zhang Ye's hosting is still pretty good. Even if it's not a singer hosting, so be it."

"But it's still such a pity."

"With a singer as the host, the interactions backstage are more interesting to watch."

"This will definitely affect the quality of the show."

Some musical instruments were brought up onto the stage.

The microphone stands were put into place.

Gradually, around 20 men and women appeared. The men were all wearing black suits while the women were dressed in white. It looked like they were a backing choir? Or was it going to be a choral performance?

The audience could not understand.

Amy wondered, "What's all of that for?"

Zhang Xia said in anticipation, "Just who has come?"

Xiaodong smiled and said, "This is a pretty large ensemble. What are they going to sing? Could it be a bel canto singer? A friend of Grandma Zhang's?"

Everything was set and ready.

The lights dimmed.

Many of the people in the audience were getting too antsy to stay seated.

"Where's the singer?"

"Come on out!"

"But there's no one at the moon gate?"

"Eh, why is Zhang Ye still standing on stage?"

"Haha, that silly fool!"

"Teacher Zhang, please leave the stage."

"Why's that idiot still standing there like a fool?"

Everyone started poking fun at him.

The next second, orchestral music played!

With that, everyone was stunned. What's going on? What is happening? Why has the music come on? But where is the singer? The replacement singer hasn't appeared yet?

Zhang Ye, who was still onstage, slowly turned around to face the audience. He raised the microphone in his hand while looking very annoyed and exhausted. It was as though he was not fully awake.

Crows squawked through the sound system.

"Caw, caw."

Then Zhang Ye actually started singing.

"Night has crept up on Chaoyang Park.

"The plaza dancers are all ready to start.

"I catch a glimpse of the trees outside.

"And wonder if this is all there is to my youth?"

The male backing choir sang, "As petals fall off flowers."

The audience was so shocked they all stood up at once!

Oh my God!

Zhang Ye!

The replacement singer is Zhang Ye!

Oh my God! Why didn't I think of it earlier!

So the rules had not been changed!

So they were still sticking with using singers as hosts!

It was Zhang Ye who had come to the rescue!

What the heck! This is going to be interesting!

Amy was dumbfounded. "No!"

Xiaodong nearly collapsed. "We're done for!"

Zhang Xia facepalmed. "Oh! Surely this isn't happening, right?"

Chen Guang had a headache now and forced a smile. "An extremely strong challenger has joined us this time. Before I agreed to come on I Am a Singer, I thought that whoever joined the show would be fine as long as it wasn't Zhang Ye."

Zhao Wuliu didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Why is it Director Zhang? If he decides to sing seriously, he's going to be more than a handful for everyone here. This is really a tough opponent."

The singers all reacted in a similar fashion!

But the audience was really happy to see him and became very excited!

Zhang Ye sang abashedly, "I have a boss named Hu Fei."

The male choir sang, "Named Hu Fei."

Zhang Ye sang, "Who shows up at 6 PM every day with the eyes of a German Shepherd."

The female choir sang, "A German Shepherd."

SFX: "Woof, woof!"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes as he sang, "Holding in his hands a steaming mug of coffee."

The male and female choir chorused, "Hey, hey, hey."

Zhang Ye sang, "Do you think we should hold a meeting?"

In the wings, Hu Fei, who was hearing this song for the first time, nearly spat out a mouthful of blood!

Beside him, Hou Ge, Xiao Lu, and a bunch of other staff burst into laughter. Hahahahaha! They could feel Zhang Ye's emotions through his singing! This fellow was still angry about it! He was

reluctant and loath to be the replacement singer! It was only because of Hu Fei and them forcing him that he got dragged onstage!

...

The next day.

The episode was broadcast.

On the television at Zhang Ye's place.

"I said, 'It isn't convenient.

"I still have to pick up my old man from the airport.

"Haven't seen him in more than thirty years.

"He hails from remote Siberia."

His parents were dumbfounded!

Haven't seen him in more than thirty years?

How old are you this year, you rascal!

...

Central TV Department 1.

"You've had nothing to do all day.

"I even caught sight of you streaming.

"Could it be that you don't have a family?

"I beg of you, please don't speak those words!

"—Sweetheart,

"Let's! Work! Overtime!"

When everyone here saw the latest episode, they were floored!

...

All over the country.

Zhang Ye's Peking opera style singing was heard in every

household!

Some people were really excited!

Some people were dumbfounded!

"I can feel myself getting drained.

"I have become dog-tired.

"Gone 18 days without removing makeup.

"Worn monthly contacts for two years and a half.

"My life is a mess, and I'm getting fat."

...

Very quickly, this song turned the Internet upside down!

Countless netizens were left kneeling to Zhang Ye!

"It's Zhang Ye who has come!"

"When I saw that the replacement singer was him, I immediately got goosebumps all over!"

"It's so awesome; this song resonates so much!"

"Is it good? Pfft! Why is it so funny!"

"Hahahaha, when my family heard this song, everyone cramped up from laughing so much!"

"It was really well sung! I also don't wanna put in overtime!"

"Zhang Ye really must have been forced into this!"

"I'm kneeling to this song!"

"What a divine tune!"

"I'll fucking give him 10 out of 10 for saving the show like this!"

"I like Zhang Ye so much!"

"This bel canto singing is really nice!"

"Haha, this guy is even scolding his executive producer, Hu Fei!"

"Pfft, I think that's exactly how Zhang Ye feels. He definitely didn't want to be the replacement singer and must have been forced into it. That's how 'I Feel So Drained' came into existence!"

Executive director!

Vote counter!

Host!

And now, a contestant?

Pfft!

Anyone else would also feel drained if they were put into that situation!

This course of action would kill Zhang Ye from exhaustion!

In the history of making television shows, there hadn't been anyone who took on so many roles at the same time. If he didn't feel drained, then who would feel drained?!

Chapter 1252: Reactions!

The next day.

On Weibo.

In the forums.

Tieba.

On the music sites.

"I Feel So Drained" kept getting played!

"So what now, Boss? (hahahahahahahahaha) "So what now, Boss? (hahahahahahahahaha) "So what now, Boss? (I bet you're happy now!) "I really have to pick my old man up!

"You'll be on my blacklist once I quit!

"Who needs to sleep? It's such a waste of time!

"Who needs to eat? When PowerPoint is life!

"Please no overtime!

"Please no overtime!

"Please no overtime!"

On the Top Chinese Music Chart, the performance of "I Feel So Drained" was very strong. On the day of the broadcast, it charted in the top ten. By the next morning, it went up to second place on the daily "Most Listened" chart. Its momentum was really strong, and it wasn't likely there would be a change to its ranking today. Even the songs performed by Zhang Xia, Chen Guang, Xiaodong, and the others during the seventh episode did not rank higher than this song. This astonished countless industry insiders!

Because this song Zhang Ye performed did not do well on the show.

During the rankings announcement segment on yesterday's episode of I Am a Singer, Chen Guang performed as expected and

took first place, with Zhang Xia coming in second, and Xiaodong in third place. Meanwhile, Zhang Ye only took fifth place and was considered to be in the lower tier of the rankings. However, that ranking was totally disconnected with the popularity of the song. The song that was ranked fifth on the show was now crushing all the other contestants' songs on the Top Chinese Music Chart. This was also something that had never happened before on the stage of I Am a Singer.

The netizens were very happy about this.

"This song is such a joy."

"The lyrics reflect the feelings of the people!"

"This is the first time I've heard Zhang Ye write a song like that!"

"My heart aches for Zhang Ye. He really is going to get drained!"

"Well, an able man is always busy."

"You can feel the sadness behind the humor. It's a really good song that mirrors the thoughts of the middle class!"

"I feel that Zhang Ye should have gotten first place!"

"Yeah, the audience was too unsupportive. If it were me, I definitely would've voted for him."

"The crucial thing is that this song has all the characteristics of a viral song. It's not something that one would perform for a singing competition."

"Yeah, 'I Feel So Drained' wouldn't get a good ranking on that type of platform, so it's already great that it came in at fifth place. After all, Zhang Ye's popularity is still a factor. If not, it might not have even gotten fifth place. In the end, I Am a Singer is a stage where singers are assessed by their singing techniques and depth of skills. Previously, be it Zhang Xia or Chen Guang, they instilled such a mindset into the audience. So there's no hope for such songs of getting first place. However, I must say that this is the song that

I like the most!"

"Me too!"

"You don't need to analyze good songs!"

"Supporting Zhang Ye!"

"Sing properly for the next episode, and you'll definitely place well."

"Yeah, if Zhang Ye chooses to get serious, even Chen Guang and Zhang Xia will have to be careful of him!"

"Teacher Zhang, we're cheering you on! We love you to death!"

The viewers were all very accepting of his performance and recognized his skill.

Reviews appeared in the media.

"Zhang Ye appears as a strong replacement singer!"

"The executive director saves the day but is burdened with multiple roles!"

"The debut of a divine tune and its spread across the country!"

"Zhang Ye's spirit of humor!"

"Chen Guang takes first place!"

"Zhang Ye's rank is not ideal. Will he face elimination in the next episode?"

"I Am a Singer's viewership ratings take top spot again!"

"I Am a Singer takes nationwide number one with viewership rating of 3.36%!"

"Zhang Ye's new show to hit 4% in viewership?"

"Viewership ratings of Sing! suddenly plummet!"

"Sing!'s latest viewership ratings: 1.02%!"

"Central TV Suffers Badly!"

"Sing!'s continued slump drags down Central TV Department 1!"

"Beijing TV confirms: I Am a Singer's grand finals to be broadcast live. A real possibility viewership could hit 'ceiling' of 4%!"

News of this was everywhere in newspapers, on television, and in news reports.

But the man at the center of all this had only just woken up.

At home.

In his bedroom.

The moment Zhang Ye opened his eyes, he ached all over and his head felt swollen and huge. This was unavoidable. He hadn't slept much the past two days as he needed to get his song ready for competition and practice it with the choir. After that, he had to oversee the recording of the show, perform onstage, and oversee the vote counting. And if you thought that he would be free immediately after the show finished recording? No! Post-recording, Zhang Ye needed to personally edit the footage. Along with other related work, he hadn't caught a wink of sleep in days. When he finally got home yesterday, he instantly fell asleep.

He really was dog-tired!

Still though, he needed to scan the news to see what they had written about him and see the viewers' reactions to his performance.

So Zhang Ye lazed in bed as he picked up his cell phone to browse the news. This song was an especially famous divine tune from Zhang Ye's previous world. It was called "I Feel So Drained" and was performed by the Shanghai-based Rainbow Chamber Singers. This song was originally a chorale, so Zhang Ye had to make some changes to it for the competition. The choral parts were either reduced or changed to a backing part while he took the role of the main vocalist for it. It seemed like reactions to it were quite good?

That's good then.

As long as everyone likes it, it's good enough for me.

Zhang Ye gave a bitter laugh as he thought to himself that at least this was not a wasted effort.

Di di.

Di di.

The chat app on his cell phone wouldn't stop beeping.

Zhang Ye opened the app and saw that someone had mentioned him.

Goof Group.

Ning Lan has invited Zhang Xia.

Zhang Xia: "Hello, everyone?"

Xiaodong: "Hello, Grandma Zhang."

Amy: "A warm welcome to Grandma Zhang!"

Everyone came out.

Zhang Xia: "@ZhangYe where are you?"

Chen Guang: "Haha, he's probably dead tired in bed."

Zhang Xia: "It's been tough on Little Zhang."

Ning Lan: "The song Zhang Ye sang left me in stitches!"

Huo Dongfang: "@ZhangYe I burst out laughing too yesterday."

Director Li Ke: "Director Zhang really knows how to be funny!"

Fan Wenli: "Old Chen and the others are probably under a lot of pressure now. With Director Zhang as the replacement singer, it's truly a nightmare."

Chen Guang: "Haha, I'm not afraid of him. At most, let's have a sing-off to decide things."

Xiaodong: "Although I don't wish to face him, I actually look forward to 1v1ing Director Zhang once."

Zhang Xia: "He didn't sing properly in this episode, so his ranking wasn't that good. It probably won't be so for the next episode."

After reading all of that, Zhang Ye chose not to appear in the chat, just smiling to himself.

Sing properly?

He shook his head lightly.

There were some things he couldn't say.

After thinking for a while, Zhang Ye called Wu Zeqing. As he had been too busy over the past two days, he didn't have time to update Wu Zeqing on how things were progressing for him.

Du du.

The call connected.

"Old Wu, what are you doing?"

"Hur hur, I'm at the office."

"Did you watch yesterday's episode?"

"I did, you sang very well. I rather liked it."

"All's good as long as you like it. Have you been busy these couple days?"

"A little."

"Whoa! You always used to answer that it was manageable whenever I asked if you were busy. Now that you're saying it's a little busy, does that mean you're very busy?"

"Yes, I do have something that I'm handling at the moment."

"What is it? Do you need my help?"

"No, I can handle it."

"Does it have something to do with me?"

"You'll find out in a few days."

"A few days? Alright then, you're making it sound so mysterious."

At this moment, another voice came from the other end of the line.

It sounded like Secretary Bai. "Chief Wu, they're fighting back!"

Fighting back?

What fighting back?

What happened?

Zhang Ye was startled. "Old Wu, what's the matter?"

Wu Zeqing gently said: "It's nothing, I'll go and handle it. I have to hang up now. Oh yes, my parents asked you to eat with them when you're free, don't forget."

"OK, I won't."

The call ended.

Zhang Ye thought of all kinds of scenarios but could not figure out what she was trying to do. Old Wu was too high in the organization, so Zhang Ye could help her out with her problems. As an average person, he wouldn't understand these political matters. Therefore, he'd rather not think too much about it and just trust Old Wu to properly handle her own matters.

Wu Zeqing had never made him worry about her.

And neither would she need him to worry about her.

The door opened.

His parents probably heard him talking on the phone from outside.

His mother came into the room. "Yo, you're finally awake?"

Zhang Ye got off the bed and grabbed his belly. "I'm starving. Mom, can I have something to eat?"

"Of course, let me make something for you." His mother knew

that he had been working really hard in recent days, so she didn't bicker with him and quickly went out to the kitchen to make lunch.

Then a call came.

It was from Hu Fei.

Zhang Ye answered in annoyance: "Brother Hu?"

Hu Fei said: "Director Zhang, it's time to work overtime!"

"...Are you doing that on purpose?"

"There's really overtime to put in. We've sold the exclusive online broadcast rights, but someone has been reporting the past few episodes that we've recorded. The authorities have notified us to rectify the previous six episodes with Xiaodong as the host. If we can't do that, we'll have to delete all of them. So please come back quickly. If we can't appeal it, you'll have to make up for six episodes of recording."

Zhang Ye's face darkened. "They're even attacking the online videos?"

"Yeah," Hu Fei said: "Central TV is too ruthless!"

Fuck!

Are they purposely causing trouble for us?

Zhang Ye immediately said: "I'll go back immediately! We definitely can't delete the videos. The exclusive online broadcast rights were sold for 10 million RMB, so how can we possibly let the online video hosting site take such a huge loss. If nothing else works, I'll rerecord them myself. Episode by episode, I'll edit and replace them all. Just wait for me to get back!"

"OK!" Hu Fei then stayed silent for a while before suddenly saying: "It's been hard on you."

Zhang Ye laughed bitterly. "Just serving the people."

He went out to the living room.

His mother had already started cooking.

Zhang Ye called out to her, "Mom."

His mother said, "The food will be ready soon."

"I'm won't be eating anymore. Something has cropped up at the office, so I have to go back immediately," Zhang Ye said.

His father frowned and said, "Go back after you've eaten."

But Zhang Ye was already putting on his clothes. "There's no time, it's really urgent. Oh right, I probably won't be coming home for the next two nights. There's too much to do, I'll be off now!"

Bang!

The door closed.

Their son disappeared from their sight.

His parents looked at each other as their hearts ached for their son.

Before their son became famous, they kept hoping that he could become famous and earn his own keep so that he would do well in life. When he really became a celebrity, they were truly happy for him, and for themselves too. As his parents, they would also look good and have something to be proud of. But as their son became busier and busier, even to the point of risking his life for his work when working two days and nights in a row became the norm, they suddenly felt quite bad. "I Feel So Drained" had touched them deeply. It was supposed to be a funny song, but when they heard it for the second or third time, their eyes reddened. No one knew what Zhang Ye was sacrificing so much for. Only his parents understood why!

He never cooked for them.

He rarely did the chores.

He hardly had any time to accompany his family.

He didn't even spend every day together with his fiancée.

Perhaps he had fallen short in his duty toward his parents, his girlfriend, his friends, and many others. But his parents both knew that their son has never fallen short in his duty toward the audience. He could skip sleep, work overtime every day, and get arrested and be placed in jail. He would do all kinds of things just to get a laugh from the audience!

This was who their son was.

Angering them at times!

Making them feel like giving him a beating at times!

Causing their hearts to ache for him at times!

But also, making them proud!

Chapter 1253: Old Wu's big action!

No one went home for the next two days.

Beijing Television was basically working around the clock to catch up on work.

Of course, it was mainly Zhang Ye who did the work, so the others were not that tired.

The first episode.

The third episode.

The fifth episode.

All the footage with Xiaodong as the host had to be edited out and replaced with Zhang Ye's hosting. As it was impossible to invite the audience again, nor get the singers to rerecord the episodes, the production work had become extremely complicated. They had to consider a lot of factors so that the edited footage would not look disjointed. If they could just cut all the parts where the guest-host appeared, that would have been easy to handle. Unfortunately, it couldn't be done this way. There were too many advertising lines and none of the guest-host lines could not be missing. All of these changes had to be managed by Zhang Ye, which made it an even more difficult task. They had to rerecord everything from the start, episode by episode.

"Let's do it one more time."

"Director Zhang, this is fine."

"No, the angle wasn't right."

"Then take a break first. We've been recording all night."

"There's not enough time; let's get this line over with."

"Director Zhang."

"Please rest!"

"There's no time for rest. I have to rehearse my song tonight. The arrangement is still not done."

"But you can't carry on like this."

"I was thoughtless about the host role and could have planned it much better. Besides, the people who reported us only did it to target me, which inadvertently affected the show as well. So I must accept this responsibility. Hur hur, enough, it's no big deal. It's not like I've never had a bigger workload than this in the past. Don't you guys know what kind of a constitution this bro has? I'll still be buzzing with energy even after working three days and three nights in a row!"

No one knew whether to laugh or cry.

You're still in the mood to crack jokes?

Didn't you say that you were drained?

And that you didn't want to put in overtime?

Bullshit! You're a workaholic through and through!

Even if we refuse to let you put in overtime, you'll still risk your life for work!

To his old colleagues at Beijing Television, Zhang Ye was an iron man. He wasn't like some bosses who would stay low as much as they could, or come in late and knock off early. Everyone on the program team knew that if as they met with any trouble, if the show met with any trouble, they would never have anything to worry about. Because as long as they looked up, Zhang Ye would definitely be standing there.

Let's carry on recording then.

Everyone got back to work and took the initiative in trying to get all of the tasks completed in the hopes that they could help share some of Zhang Ye's burden. As they worked, they were cussing their hearts out in their minds at Central TV Department 1! If it

weren't for that bunch of people reporting their show and resorting to underhanded methods by privately using public services for personal gain, they wouldn't be in such a sorry state.

Online.

Many netizens also realized that something was wrong.

"Look!"

"Ah, I Am a Singer's online videos have been altered!"

"There are no longer any scenes with Xiaodong. She's been replaced by Zhang Ye."

"There are even two episodes that are unavailable? Hasn't the ban on those two episodes been lifted?"

"They've been reported again?"

"It's Central TV again?"

"Fuck! Are they finished yet?"

"I heard that someone from Korea has already been in contact regarding the copyright for I Am a Singer. I think they should be interested in buying the copyright, so this is a good chance for something locally produced to make an international splash! It's going to be a first in history! The Voice's copyright deal did not go through, because the American company that came to negotiate for it was thwarted by Central TV Department 1, who wanted to sell it off without Zhang Ye's knowledge. And now they're doing this? I beg of you, please! Can you people please leave I Am a Singer alone?"

"Isn't there anyone who can keep Central TV in check?"

"This is so infuriating!"

Quite a number of people were raging at this!

Even a clay figurine retains heat!

An hour and a half later, they finally finished rerecording all the

lines.

Zhang Ye went to the bathroom to wash his face and freshen up. Luckily, he could still hold up since his physical stamina exceeded that of a normal person's. Then he took a deep breath and dried his hands before texting Wu Zeqing.

"Are you still busy?"

Old Wu replied very quickly: "Almost done."

"Just what is it?"

"Hur hur, you'll find out very soon."

"Let me know if there's anything I can help with."

"That's not necessary; we just need a bit of luck."

Zhang Ye had been pondering for the past two days about what was keeping Old Wu busy. No matter how much he thought about it, he could not guess what Old Wu was trying to do. But he knew that Wu Zeqing must have been busy fighting for him!

Was she going to find trouble with Central TV Department 1's executives?

Or was she going to pick on Sing!?

He couldn't figure it out. Old Wu was afraid that he would think too much about this, so she didn't reveal anything at all.

The matter was going to be resolved soon?

It just needed a little bit of luck?

I might not be able to help you in other ways, but luck?

Sure, I'll give you some of that!

Zhang Ye tucked his cell phone away without further ado and brought up his game ring's virtual interface. He activated the Lucky Halo (Upgraded) and an angelic halo appeared over his head. A bright, pulsating glow rippled outward!

-100,000!

-100,000!

His Reputation Points decreased rapidly!

But since it was to help Old Wu, he didn't feel the pinch at all!

Five minutes!

Ten minutes!

Twenty minutes!

Zhang Ye continued working and even went over to the station's management office for a while. When he was done there, he instinctively sensed that something was amiss. However, he could not put a finger on what was wrong.

Hu Fei was just approaching from the opposite direction.

Zhang Ye immediately asked, "Brother Hu, what's going on?"

Hu Fei was also confused. "I don't know either."

"It feels like something is amiss." Zhang Ye said, "Several of the station heads aren't around, and the only deputy station head I saw around was making seven or eight calls in his office. Even when he was speaking to me, his mind was elsewhere."

Hu Fei analyzed in a low voice, "I sense that something has happened, but it should not be about our station."

"Then where?" Zhang Ye said startled.

...

At this moment!

Astonishing news spread throughout the industry!

Central TV's Station Head had stepped down from his position at the station due to work reassignment orders and the incoming Station Head was going to be a deputy chief from the SARFT that they'd never heard of before.

Central TV was going through a leadership change!

There was an uproar in the industry!

The media was stunned!

"This is too sudden!"

"It's really too sudden!"

"Is the news from a trusted source?"

"It's already been verified. It's true!"

"Who has the power to do something like that?"

"Holy shit! Who has the power to touch Central TV's Station Head?"

The industry was in utter disbelief!

...

At Beijing Television.

Xiao Lu cried out, "Damn!"

Dafei went slack-jawed. "Wh-What is going on?"

Hou Ge was beyond surprised. "Who has the power to do that? Even the big brother of Central TV has been removed from his post? Because of what? Could it really just be a normal job reassignment?"

Hou Di said excitedly, "If it was just a normal reassignment, how could it have happened without any warning?"

Hu Fei said in shock, "No wonder I felt like something was going to happen! So something big did happen!"

...

Shanghai Television.

"This?"

"The higher-ups have begun infighting?"

"They definitely have!"

"Why though?"

"Who took the first shot?"

"Who knows!"

...

At Central TV.

A lot of people blanched!

Especially those from Central TV Department 1, they all looked as pale as ghosts!

"Why is this happening?"

"How did it turn out like this?"

"That's impossible!"

"Where's Director Jiang? Director Jiang must know what's going on!"

"Director Jiang is on leave."

"What about the other deputy directors?"

"They are all on leave!"

"Th-This is a huge problem!"

"It's a shakeup!"

"With the station going through a leadership change, there'll definitely be some reshuffling in the ranks. Let's just pray that everything will go fine for us!"

...

The media reports went out.

The reassignment was also quickly confirmed by the authorities.

On paper, this transfer looked like a normal reassignment. But anyone would know that it was not that simple. They could all

smell the bloody infighting even if no one had the inside scoop, even if nobody knew exactly what had happened between the higher-ups.

On Weibo.

"Did they really replace him?"

"It's good that they did that. I hope that this will change the culture of Central TV."

"Yes. They shouldn't keep picking on Zhang Ye like this. Rather, isn't it better to think of ways to join hands to better the industry? If they could work together and go global, isn't that much better?"

"Was it because Sing! performed so badly that they decided to replace the Station Head?"

"Previous poster, you're too naive. Would such a small matter call for the removal of a Station Head?"

"Then what could have happened?"

"Let's not make wild guesses. It doesn't matter anyway."

This was a huge move!

Later, even the industry did not dare discuss this matter!

...

The truth?

The inner workings?

Perhaps only Zhang Ye knew exactly what had happened.

This fellow was also shocked by the outcome. He had thought that Old Wu would only look for trouble with Sing! After all, they did take his original copyright and made some slight modifications to it in the first place. Or she might have taken it up with Central TV Department 1, since they had also used non-professional hosts in their shows. Their double standard for the regulations was definitely something she could pick on. But never could Zhang Ye

have expected that his expectations were too low. He had really underestimated Wu Zeqing and was too petty!

Old Wu did not go for Central TV Department 1!

Neither did she go for Sing!

Instead, Old Wu directly "asked" their leader to step aside!

Zhang Ye called her.

"Hello." Old Wu's voice was still as gentle as ever. He could not hear a trace of anything unusual in her voice.

But Zhang Ye's tone was one of amazement. "Are you alright?"

Old Wu laughed. "Me? What could happen to me?"

Zhang Ye said: "What were you doing? That was too risky!"

Old Wu said: "It wasn't risky. It was just a difference in our political views. My relationship with Old Yu has always been quite good. I've also talked with him on many occasions and know what he's like. He's just more conservative, a little stubborn, and always keeping an eye on what he's guarding. We've entered a new era, though, be it for the entertainment industry or for the TV stations. Being stubborn doesn't help with advancing things. The first time, it was about your copyright for The Voice. I didn't say anything about it at the time. Then, when they infringed on your copyright by modifying it, I did not say anything either. But I cannot allow them to carry on misbehaving for a third time. Therefore, this change was necessary. If he can't perform? If he doesn't want to help advance the industry? Then we'll change him out. We'll replace him with someone else who can bring us forward."

That was so well-put!

Just look at her consciousness!

Just look at her awareness of the issues!

Just look at what level she was on!

When Zhang Ye heard that, he actually got quite embarrassed. That was because he knew that he was also one of those people that Old Wu mentioned as not having any aspirations and would only guard their own interests. But it didn't matter. Even if his aspirations were low, it was fine as long as his fiancée's horizons were much broader than his!

Wu Zeqing said: "We were lucky this time. It just so happened that another deputy chief sided with me on this issue. Otherwise, it wouldn't have been that easy. Political struggles are always rather complicated. That was also why I didn't wish to inform you about it beforehand."

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "It's a good thing that you didn't tell me about it. Because even if you did, I wouldn't have understood."

Wu Zeqing smiled. "If you still wish to understand, I'll teach you step by step in the future."

"Aiyo, please don't." Zhang Ye quickly said: "I'm not meant to understand such things, hur hur. If this bro had any talent for politics, would I have offended so many people in the industry over the years? Heh, this is just how I am. My thinking has always been that of the ordinary folk. I can't change it."

Central TV was undergoing a leadership change!

There wouldn't be anyone finding trouble with him from now on!

Old Wu had fixed things from the front line, while Zhang Ye supported her with his "luck" from behind the scenes!

The cooperation between this couple was seamless!

Chapter 1254: The eighth episode's knockout round! (First Half)

On this day.

At noon.

It was the day of eighth episode's recording.

At Old Wu's parents' house, Zhang Ye was playing Go with Wu Changhe in the courtyard after lunch.

"Uncle, hurry up and make your move."

"I'm still thinking, what are you rushing me for!"

"I have to attend my show's recording this afternoon. I barely squeezed out some time to come over for lunch."

"Alright, alright, I'll make my move here, a stretch."

"Then I'll play a push through over here."

"Hey, no, don't play it there!"

"Why would I not play it there?"

"You shouldn't make the move over here. Make a stand over here instead."

"Why would I play a stand there! That would make my group dead!"

"Are you gonna play a stand or not?"

"I'm not!"

"Then I won't play that move anymore!"

"Damn, you're trying to cheat!"

"Who's cheating? Ah? Who are you accusing of cheating?"

"Place it back down! You can't take back your moves!"

"Well, I'm taking it back, so what!"

The two men had only just started on the game, but they nearly came to blows!

Beside them watching, Li Qinqin didn't know whether to laugh or cry. These two grown men's tempers were really the worst when they came together.

In the end, it was still Wu Changhe who lost. He said angrily, "I wasn't in my best form today. I'll definitely slaughter you next time! Just you wait!"

Zhang Ye bade farewell and headed out of the house, saying in doubt, "I'll slaughter you twice!"

"I'll slaughter you thrice!"

"I'll slaughter you five times!"

"I'll slaughter you ten times!"

"I'll slaughter you fifteen times over!"

Li Qinqin sent Zhang Ye to the door and closed it after he stepped out. However, even after the two of them were out of each other's sight, they still shouted over the courtyard door. Now Li Qinqin did feel like laughing.

...

Later that afternoon.

At the recording studio of I Am a Singer.

When Zhang Ye arrived, Hou Ge and Dafei immediately came looking for him.

"Aiya, Director Zhang, where have you been?"

"We were all waiting for you."

"Surely you guys have to allow me to eat lunch, right?"

"Please have a look at this document."

"Alright, I got it."

"We're starting the recording at 2 PM?"

"Yes, there's no change to the time."

As the core leadership of the program team, and with all of the multiple roles that he was juggling, Zhang Ye couldn't even step away for a bit. Every little thing that went on in the program team would require his attention. He had only just come back from lunch but was busy immediately. Even his plan of taking a siesta was wrecked!

But the sense was that everyone was in a good mood today. With the leadership change at Central TV, the main culprit behind their torture was finally gone. There was going to be a reshuffle over there, so I Am a Singer's program team staff were all excited and motivated. They knew that no one would be picking on them in the near future.

Backstage, he bumped into Zhang Xia and Chen Guang.

"Zhang'er." Chen Guang waved.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Old Chen, how's the rehearsal going?"

Chen Guang said confidently, "Everything is great."

Zhang Xia asked, "Little Zhang, how's your preparation going?"

Xiaodong also came to join in on the fun. "Director Zhang, what will you be singing today?"

Zhang Ye blinked. "I finished rehearsing, but I'll keep the song a secret for now."

Chen Guang said warily, "Are you going to bring out your killer move? Looks like I had better perform to my best."

"Oh, come on. You're speaking like you haven't been putting your best foot forward the whole time." Zhang Ye chuckled.

Xiaodong giggled. "I've also prepared a good song for this episode. It's bound to give all of you a scare. Director Zhang, you had better be careful. Don't lose."

Zhang Ye said, "Sure."

Zhang Xia smiled and said, "I'm just looking forward to seeing what new song you'll come up with this time. I'll go and practice a little bit more, so I'll see all of you onstage? Good luck!"

"OK."

"See you onstage."

"Do well, everyone."

Soon after, recording began.

They picked lots first.

Dong Shanshan smiled and said, "Before we pick lots, I suggest that we welcome the new singer onto the show. Director Zhang came onto the show too suddenly last week, and everyone was unable to react. Director Zhang stayed onstage the entire time and didn't come to join us last week, so since we're all here now, let's give him an official welcome."

"Welcome, Director Zhang."

"Hahaha!"

"Welcome!"

"Director Zhang, please have mercy on us all."

Everyone was applauding to welcome him.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Alright, thank you, everyone. But save the plea for mercy. I was one of the lower ranked contestants on the last episode, so it'd be great if I don't get eliminated today."

Xiaodong threw a jab out. "However low you're ranked, would you be any lower than Amy?"

Amy replied, "...Sister Dong, can I hit you?"

Everyone laughed.

The lot picking segment began. There were cheers and cries.

Xiaodong had picked #1.

Chen Guang was #2.

Zhang Xia got #3.

As for Zhang Ye, his luck was pretty good. He managed to pick #7, which meant that he would be the last one to sing.

Today was the eighth episode, as well as the knockout round that took place every other episode. The singers might all look very relaxed as they joked and laughed, but it would be a lie if they claimed they weren't nervous. The ones who did well would have to maintain their momentum and try to aim a little higher to not disappoint the viewers. Meanwhile, those who didn't do so well the previous episode would have to give their all in order to stay in the competition. They would have to pull out all the stops with their performances, or they'd soon be bidding farewell to this largest and most popular stage in the country.

Everyone wanted to stay until the end!

Everyone wanted a chance to be part of the grand finals!

For this reason, every one of the singers would do their very best!

At the front of the house.

The studio was packed full.

"I'm really looking forward to it!"

"Let's get started quickly!"

"Gogogogo!"

"I really like Zhang Xia!"

"I super love Xiaodong and Amy!"

"I only like Zhang Ye!"

"Haha, I'm also looking forward to Zhang Ye's new song!"

"Is he really not going to sing the same song twice?"

"Yeah, Zhang Ye has never sung the same song onstage."

"With Sing! as good as dead, there's only I Am a Singer to look forward to now!"

"The viewership ratings peaked last week. It's the knockout round this week, and with Zhang Ye joining the show, it's definitely gonna go one step further. I wonder how it'll do."

"The song that Zhang Ye sang last episode was a real piece of work!"

"Hahahaha, but it was very nice to listen to!"

"He's definitely going to sing properly this time."

"Yeah, it's the knockout round, of course he has to do his best!"

"Yeah, Zhang Ye's ranking at the moment puts him in a dangerous spot."

"Teacher Zhang, we'll be cheering you on!"

Even before the singers came out, the audience was very excited about the show. Quite a lot of people were shouting the names of the singers they liked and cheering them on.

The lights converged to a spot on the stage.

Zhang Ye came out smiling, holding a microphone.

The applause burst through the roof!

Standing still, Zhang Ye looked at everyone as he articulated, "Hello, everyone. Welcome to the stage of I Am a Singer, brought to you exclusively by our title sponsor, the leader in health products, Brain Gold. I am the executive director, Zhang Ye. Oh, and the host. Oh, and also a participating singer—hai, let's not talk about that. If I say any more, I'm going to start crying."

The audience laughed.

Zhang Ye said, "Today is the knockout round, and one of our singers will soon exit this stage. That person could be either me,

Teacher Amy, Teacher Zhao Wuliu, or Teacher Chen Guang. On this stage, anything is possible. So, as the new replacement singer looking to avoid elimination, I've decided to seek the advice of our highly experienced Teacher Amy on how she successfully avoids elimination every round."

Avoiding elimination?

Highly experienced?

The audience was cramping up in laughter!

Backstage, Amy nearly fainted!

Zhang Ye said solemnly, "Teacher Amy told me something that I thought was very beneficial."

What did she say?

What did Amy say?

The audience was dying to know.

Then Zhang Ye said, "To summarize what she said to me—" Suddenly, his expression changed as he took out a cue card and said, "Thank you to the leading health supplement brand, Brain Gold Company, for being the title sponsors of our show. Thank you to Hubei Pharmaceuticals' strong support for us. If you're going to use a computer tablet, use Lilai's eight-inch tablet with multi-core technology. Honey Sweet fruit juice, so sweet that you can feel it in your heart!"

Pfft!

Fuck you!

Was that it?

You're doing it again!

The audience doubled over in laughter while jeers rang out. "Yiiiiii!"

That feeling and atmosphere made it seem like they were

watching a crosstalk performance!

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "There, I've brought out those ads in the most inconspicuous of ways, so my job here is done. So then, shall we hand the stage over to our seven singers? Let's welcome the first singer."

Pfft!

Are you really inconspicuous?!

Chapter 1255: The eighth episode's knockout round! (Second Half)

After the laughter died down, the audience got settled.

It was time for today's first singer to take the stage!

"It's Xiaodong!"

"Sister Dong will be performing first!"

"I'm so looking forward to it!"

"Go Xiaodong!"

When Xiaodong came out through the moon gate, applause rang out.

Xiaodong smiled and bowed to the audience. Then, she composed herself a little as she gripped the microphone. However, she found that her palms were all sweaty, so she forced herself to calm down. Then she turned to Music Director Bai Yuanfei and the rest of the band and nodded at them.

The music played.

Xiaodong's emotions poured into the song at once.

She sang lightly.

"My heart—

"is beating with her.

"In a—

"dream, I hold you close."

It turned out to be an English song!

It was a song that was rather niche with the audience but very popular and highly praised by those in the music industry. Almost everyone in the music industry knew this song—with the exception of Zhang Ye, since he wasn't originally from this world,

so he naturally did not know that this song had won a grand prize overseas.

"How nice!"

"It's so touching!"

"She's singing her heart out!"

"I don't usually get to hear Sister Dong singing in English."

The audience responded very well to her performance.

The second to go on stage was Chen Guang.

The moment he opened his mouth and sang, the audience was taken aback again.

"I know,

"someday,

"that you'll be by—

"my side."

The audience was absolutely amazed!

"Wow!"

"This is so good!"

"Old Chen's vocals are great!"

"He's singing an English song too? How nice!"

"Old Chen's singing is amazing. Even if he's not the top singer in the music industry, he's definitely got to be one of the top three!"

"Old Chen is playing to our emotions with a sentimental song as well. I was so touched!"

The third singer made her appearance.

It was Grandma Zhang Xia.

She actually lined up a very old Japanese song for her performance today. This Japanese song was very well-known in

their country, and many of the older generation knew how to sing it. But with some changes made to it by Zhang Xia, the arrangement of the song became completely different.

"Look up at the starry sky.

"As the spring breeze races through the fields."

The audience was transfixed by her singing.

Many of those in the audience who were above the age of 60 even teared up when they heard the melody of the song.

"This is so awesome!"

"Her singing is so good!"

"How eargasmic!"

Following that.

Amy was the fourth to come on. She chose to perform a Korean song that was the claim-to-fame song of a famous Korean girl group. It was a song that many people knew how to sing along to, and it was very popular all over Asia.

Then it was Huang Cheng's turn. He brought out an Italian classic!

Zhao Wuliu followed next and unexpectedly sang an English rock song!

The singers were all at their wits' end.

While Zhao Wuliu was performing, the singers who had finished were all sitting together backstage.

Zhang Xia said bitterly, "It's another foreign song?"

Xiaodong said in a speechless manner, "How could it be such a coincidence?"

Chen Guang sighed and said, "All of us thought of doing the same thing!"

The show was into its eighth episode now, so they had performed too many times on this stage. The audience was becoming familiar with their singing and understood them better. As such, their expectations slowly increased. It was possible that their singing was still as good as before, but the audience was longer surprised by it. So they would naturally find that their singing only sounded average. Having come so far, it was the deadliest factor for them. As a result, everyone thought of breaking the mold and sought to change things up by singing in a different style. But who could have thought that all of them would have the same idea and choose to sing a foreign language song on the same episode!

The audience was also somewhat startled.

At the beginning, everyone was quite pleasantly surprised. But that surprise turned to numbness. No matter how good the singing was, they couldn't stand to keep listening. If it was just one foreign song, then fine. But two songs? Four songs? Six songs? From the first singer to the sixth singer who performed on stage, they were all singing foreign songs? This made them weary, and some people could no longer appreciate the performances onstage. They were finding it tiresome.

"Man!"

"Really?"

"How did that happen?"

"Is performing a foreign song the theme for today?"

"How boring."

"Yeah, surely they can't just sing foreign songs today, right? What the hell is this?"

In the wings.

Zhang Ye found Hou Ge. He said with a frown, "What's with this?"

Hou Ge wiped his sweat away. "It wasn't supposed to be this way at the beginning. Later, three of the singers requested to change their songs at the last minute. There was no time by then, and since you said to give the singers the most freedom of control that they could have, the program team didn't want to influence the choice of their songs. As such, we didn't raise any objections and thought that it would be alright."

Zhang Ye said, "You call this alright?"

Hou Ge said, "It was my fault, blame me."

Dafei added, "We didn't thoroughly consider things."

"Next time there's a 'collision' of songs on such a big scale, you must inform me immediately." Zhang Ye was also negligent on his part as he did not check the song list for this episode.

They were all foreign songs?

How could that be acceptable!

In the end, I have to be the one to save the day again!

Do you guys think it's been easy for me in recent days?!

Onstage, Zhao Wuliu's performance came to an end.

The audience still applauded, but it was obvious that it was perfunctory. There was no enthusiasm and the applause was scattered and soft.

Zhang Ye went up onstage. "Thank you for the wonderful performance, Teacher Zhao. You're indeed a veteran of the music industry. You still sang as well as ever, so I believe that the pressure on the next singer will surely be enormous."

The next singer?

Isn't that you!

You're the only one who hasn't performed yet!

You aren't going to sing another foreign song too, are you?

Zhang Ye looked at the band and nodded to signal that he was ready.

The lights dimmed.

Zhang Ye took a deep breath and looked into the audience. His expression slowly became serious. Honestly speaking, he didn't really like the songs the other singers performed. English songs? Japanese songs? Korean songs? Italian songs? But there was not a single Chinese song? What is this? What is this development? This is a stage in China, a Chinese show! Do we not have our own stuff? Do we not have our own content?

Alright then, let me do it!

I'll plant this flag deep!

Let me tell all of you what it means to have a Chinese style!

Let me tell all of you what a song of the Chinese is!

Come on! I'll show every one of you the most authentic Chinese style song from my previous world!

Backstage.

The camera focused on Zhang Ye's expression.

Xiaodong was startled. "Zhang Ye has gotten serious!"

Zhang Xia also turned solemn. "He's getting real serious."

Amy gave a wry smile. "I think we're all in danger now."

At the front of the house.

The audience was also slightly taken aback!

"Everyone, look at Zhang Ye's expression!"

"He's angry!"

"Yeah, he's an ultra-nationalist to begin with!"

"What is he going to sing?"

"I'm really looking forward to hearing it!"

"Go Teacher Zhang! Show them what you can do!"

"Right, foreigners are scum!"

"Let's hear some music that we can call our own!"

"It's all on you, Teacher Zhang!"

Instantaneously, the audience's expectation overflowed. With the folk music accompaniment playing, they got even more excited. Some people were even prematurely feeling their emotions run high as they stood to their feet!

The air seemed to freeze!

The next moment, Zhang Ye elegantly brought the microphone close to his lips. A deep, faraway look appeared in his eyes. Without any warning, he sang 1 at the top of his voice.

"The vast horizon is my love!

"At the foot of rolling green hills flowers bloom!

"Whichever rhythm that is the most rocking!

"Whichever singing that is the most! Happy!"

Chen Guang was dumbfounded!

Zhang Xia was dumbfounded!

Xiaodong was dumbfounded!

Amy was dumbfounded!

Zhao Wuliu was dumbfounded!

The audience was also dumbfounded from listening!

However, Zhang Ye sang higher as he crescendoed.

"Winding rivers gush from the Heavens!

"Flowing into a sea of dazzling colors!

"The hottest folk songs are what we hope to find!"

"Singing as we travel is the most! Carefree!"

"If we sing, we want to sing to our! Hearts'! Content!"

Pfft!

Some people burst into laughter!

Everyone in the audience was floored!

The fuck! What kind of song is this?

Are you fucking doing that again?

Can you be more serious? Please!

...

The next day.

The show was broadcast.

"You are the most beautiful cloud in my sky!

"Let me do what it takes to have you stay!

"Have! You! Stay!

"Slowly singing in the hottest ethnic trend!

"Let love sweep away all of the dust!

"You are the most beautiful cloud in my heart!

"Filling a glass of fine wine to have you stay!

"Have! You! Stay!

"Forever singing in the hottest ethnic trend!

"Is the most beautiful gesture in the whole sky!"

Zhang Ye's singing and dancing were being showcased on television.

Countless viewers were dumbfounded for a moment by this scene before they burst into laughter. Some people were even laughing so hard they couldn't breathe!

The most rocking?

I'll rock your sister!

Have you stay?

Get lost!

Hurry up and leave!

"I'm kneeling!"

"Lord Zhang, you've really made me kneel to you!"

"Can you not be this funny?"

"Fuck! Where's my Chinese style? Was that it?"

"Aiyo, I'm dying of laughter!"

"Just look at Chen Guang, Zhang Xia, Xiaodong, and the others' expressions when they're on camera. Hahahaha, I can't take it anymore! Please allow me to laugh a little more!"

"They must've thought that Zhang Ye would sing some earth-shatteringly emotional song. Just look at the anticipation and wariness in their eyes. But it crumbled in an instant!"

"This song is awful!"

"But it's a very nice listen!"

"It's not only nice, it's too goddamn catchy!"

"I'm done for! I've been brainwashed by Zhang Ye!"

"Me too, my head is totally filled with this song!"

"No one can save this joker!"

"Hahahaha! Who'll put down that troll!"

With this episode's broadcast, Zhang Ye defeated all of the viewers, industry insiders, and singers!

Chapter 1256: 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend' sweeps the country!

The next day.

The entertainment sections of the newspapers were all reporting on I Am a Singer.

"I Am a Singer's viewership ratings hits a new high!"

"Viewership ratings of 3.49%—a legendary variety show!"

"Zhang Ye performs yet another divine tune live!"

"'The Hottest Ethnic Trend' tops the daily Top Chinese Music Chart!"

"Zhang Ye nearly gets eliminated!"

"Zhao Wuliu becomes the next eliminated singer!"

"Zhang Ye and Amy barely manage to stay in the competition!"

"Voting for Zhang Ye continues to be sluggish?"

"Zhang Ye ranked sixth in both the latest episode's knockout round and in the overall ranking over two episodes!"

"Experts are starting to doubt Zhang Ye's singing ability!"

Today, the country had been bombarded with news of I Am a Singer. Be it the topicality of discussions, or the viewership ratings, or on the music charts, they were number one in every aspect.

...

Back at home.

"The Hottest Ethnic Trend" was playing on a loop on the computer.

When Zhang Ye woke up, he opened the bedroom door and looked outside. "Who's playing the song?"

His mother looked back. "It's me, son. You're up already?"

"I got woken up by the noise you were making." Zhang Ye laughed bitterly. "I was so comfortable and dreaming that I was lying on soft and fluffy clouds until a crowd of aunties suddenly flew up there and started dancing. It scared me awake. So it was because you were playing 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend.'" To him, it was exactly this image he would think of whenever he heard this song.

His mother wondered, "Dancing? What are you talking about?"

Zhang Ye coughed and said, "Nothing."

Beside them, his dad said, "Your mom has listened to this song more than a dozen times since early in the morning."

"That's because I like it." His mother said excitedly, "This song is soooo good, son. That 'Exaggerated' or 'Wild Rose' that you sang before can't even compare to this one! This song of yours is really nice. In the future, you should sing more of such songs. It's exactly what I love to hear!"

Zhang Ye laughed, "Sure."

His father said in annoyance, "How is this good?"

"As if you know a thing." His mother stared at his father and said, "This song is really good and my son sings it very well too. People on the Internet are claiming that my son's singing has declined and that he's lost his touch at writing good songs. Ptui! What the hell do they know? This is what a good song is. Is mainstream art not considered art? No?"

But his father just said, "What are you singing next episode?"

"I haven't thought of it yet," Zhang Ye said.

His father said, "Why don't you start singing seriously?"

Zhang Ye laughed in response. "Dad, I'm already singing very seriously. Do you know how many days it took me to rehearse this

song? I practiced it for three straight days and went through a dozen arrangements over a dozen rehearsals. It might sound simple when you're listening to it, but it isn't simple at all. Since I'm going onstage, every song that I sing must be sung properly. I would never hold back."

Did this song require any skill?

You even needed to practice it for three days?

And go through that many versions of the arrangement?

His father could not understand it, so he didn't say anything else.

Zhang Ye said, "I need to head over to the office today, so I won't be having lunch at home. I haven't been there in quite a few days."

His mother continued listening to the song. "Shoo, go then."

...

Jiaomen East.

A familiar tune was reverberating through the neighborhood.

Deng, deng deng deng deng, deng deng deng deng deng deng deng deng.

Deng, deng deng deng deng, deng!

Zhang Ye was startled. He even had the sinking feeling that he somehow returned to his previous world!

A group of aunties were standing there twisting about.

They were even led by someone who shouted out instructions every now and then.

"This movement should be done like this."

"Auntie Zhou, raise your hands a little higher."

"Big Sis Chen, you're not letting yourself go. Your movements are too limited."

"Right, that's very good."

"Everyone, follow my lead."

"I'll be teaching the seventh step next."

Zhang Ye's jaw dropped!

Dammit! The song was only released yesterday!

But today there are already dance moves for it?

Isn't this too fast?

Zhang Ye suddenly had a bad feeling about this. Was the plaza (square) dance careers and industry of this world going to achieve prosperity and reach a peak because of him?

Upstairs.

In the studio.

Everyone was here today, so it became noisy in the office when Zhang Ye arrived.

"Director Zhang!"

"Ah, Director Zhang!"

"The boss has returned!"

"Hahaha, we've all heard your new song!"

"Awesome!"

"Amazing!"

Everyone was feeling extremely excited.

Zhang Ye asked, "Can you guys get any more exaggerated than this?"

"Oh, we can." The moment Ha Qiqi came up, she chuckled and said, "While we were watching the episode last night, we got rather worried when we heard your performance. It was a little...you know. You didn't get a good ranking either at sixth place, which meant you were second to last and barely survived the knockout round. But to our surprise, when the Celebrity Rankings Index got

refreshed after midnight, your popularity score actually went up by a little. We were all stunned. At your current level, even gaining a little bit of popularity is a huge deal. Your 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend' was several times more popular than your other popular songs like 'Exaggerated,' 'I Am What I Am,' 'Wild Rose,' 'I Really Love You,' amongst others. It was unbelievable!"

Zhang Zuo gave a wry smile. "Yeah, it was really frightening."

Wu Yi added, "All of us misjudged it!"

Little Wang said excitedly, "This song was amazingly good. With it, we've gained a surprisingly large number of middle-aged to senior citizen fans. This was something that had never happened in the past. Our influence in the middle-aged and senior citizens group has always been the poorest, but this song has totally made up for that and brought in a lot of new fans. It has increased the pie to a much larger size. This has an even better effect than increasing the cohesiveness of those long-time fans and will contribute greatly to the increasing of your popularity!"

Everyone knew how advantageous it was to expand one's fan base. If your fanbase started at 100 million, even if you were to convert all of them into diehard fans, there would still only be 100 million of them. But expanding one's fanbase was different. It could turn that 100 million fans into 200 million fans, or even 300 million fans. With the fanbase expanding, the increase in one's popularity would no longer be as simple as growing by severalfold. A celebrity's development space and potential would become much greater as a result!

Every celebrity and their teams knew this, but it was not something that most of them could achieve. A lot of people would not be able to go further once they reached a certain extent. For example, a singer like Chen Guang was already standing atop the music industry. Based on his fanbase numbers, his popularity had peaked, and it would be much harder for him to go any further. But Zhang Ye could do it. His fanbase was still expanding and

extending. This time, he had extended his reach into the middle-aged and senior citizens group. This was undoubtedly inspiring and exciting news and proved that Zhang Ye's popularity could still grow much higher!

All of the studio staff were jumping for joy at this news!

This song's popularity had truly surprised them. And that spread of the other song, "I Feel So Drained," was also something they had not expected!

It had actually gotten that popular?

However, Zhang Ye was not surprised. It was because he knew how good this song was back in his previous world. Disregarding the song's depth and meaning, or even any other points, just its popularity and spread were things that practically no other song could match. Jay Chou? Andy Lau? Eason Chan? Whoever came its way would be left kneeling!

...

After handling some matters in the office, Zhang Ye left in a hurry again. There was still a load of work waiting for him at the television station. There was really no time for him to take a break.

Downstairs.

Zhang Ye took the elevator down.

When the elevator door opened, he bumped into Yang Shu and Chenchen.

Chenchen glanced at him and waved. "Hi, Zhang Ye."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "You're so rude. You should be calling me Uncle Zhang."

Chenchen laughed, "Hur hur."

Yang Shu looked off. She only gave Zhang Ye one look and respectfully called him "Senior" before walking off without another word.

Zhang Ye said, "Junior Sis, recently how've you..."

However, Yang Shu had already walked up the stairs and did not seem to have heard him.

Zhang Ye was taken aback. He looked at Chenchen and asked, "What happened with your Auntie Yang?"

Chenchen pouted. "Old Yang is angry with you."

"Ah?" Zhang Ye was baffled and asked, "What is she angry at me for? I don't think I offended her?"

Chenchen didn't go up the stairs. She just strolled into the elevator. "How would I know about the things between you adults?"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "What does a little adult like you not know? Alright, I'll go upstairs and see how she's doing." He followed her back into the lift and went upstairs again. His junior martial sister had always been very polite and respectful to him. She would always listen to him about almost anything he said, so Zhang Ye was rather concerned now that she was blowing him off.

At Old Yang's apartment.

The door was unlocked and could be pushed open.

Zhang Ye went inside while blinking. "Little Yang, what's the matter?"

Yang Shu was wiping down the table and did not say anything.

"Who got on your nerves?" Zhang Ye intentionally put on a stern face. "Tell me and I'll go seek justice for you!"

Yang Shu finally looked up at him and said, "Senior Bro, can you not sing such songs anymore?"

Zhang Ye was taken aback. "Why not?"

Yang Shu didn't bother holding back the moment she decided to speak up. "If I may be disrespectful, Senior Bro, I have to criticize

you! Since this morning, all the nearby neighborhoods have been taken over by 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend.' Those uncles and aunties who used to learn Taiji Fist from me have also started telling me that they don't wish to continue the lessons. All of them went to join the plaza dancing clubs instead! Our Taiji Fist group has suffered a great loss, Senior Bro! There are only the two of us left in our Taiji branch of martial arts. You are the current generation's senior brother and the leader who represents us, so how could you go and aid others! How am I going to teach Taiji now that there isn't anyone left!"

Ah?

Was that it?

Zhang Ye was floored. "I was wondering what the big deal was!"

Yang Shu scowled and said, "This is a huge deal!"

"Aiya, Little Yang, you must set your sights further than this." Zhang Ye didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He said, "You're a young lady, yet you always go out to the streets to give out pamphlets. What are you always eyeing those retired old men and women for? If they want to dance, let them dance. They're dancing to my tunes anyway, so that'll increase my popularity. When your senior bro gets to the S-list and takes the place of one of those seven spots, my influence will grow. At that time, we can start a Taiji Fist martial arts school to give lessons, or even set up a company to do it. At that time, would we still lack for people? At worst, I'll film a film or a TV series, alright? I'll use it to promote and spread Taiji Fist. At that time, will you still be afraid that people won't know about Taiji Fist? So don't be too anxious, just wait until I reach the top!"

"Ah, really?"

"Of course!"

"Senior Bro, you have such great vision!"

"That's of course. How else could I be your senior!"

After a little bullshitting, he finally placated Yang Shu.

...

On this day.

"The Hottest Ethnic Trend" swept the country!

However, no one could have realized that this was just the beginning!

No one could predict that in another few days, this song would actually reach a state of hysteria!

Chapter 1257: The plaza dancing craze!

On the same day.

In the afternoon.

At Beijing Television.

"Director Zhang, the advertisers are asking if you could add a few lines for them in your script."

"I can't do that, they're not the title sponsors."

"Director Zhang, this is the song list for this week."

"Is it confirmed?"

"This was submitted by the singers, so there could still be changes."

"Alright, I got it."

"Director Zhang..."

"Director Zhang..."

Bringing over a show from his previous world untouched was a very big advantage. This was because the show would have already gone through a market testing phase in his previous world. But there were also disadvantages. For example, like now, due to all of the show's tasking, planning, and content being totally controlled by Zhang Ye, he needed to guarantee that the show would be 100% done according to how he pictured it. As such, it required every small detail to get Zhang Ye's approval before it could be implemented. This no doubt increased his workload by a lot.

He had to run around resolving issues.

He was busy wherever he went.

Finally, even Zhang Ye himself could not take it anymore. He found a sofa and lay down. He did not even sit; he just laid totally flat, looking extremely fatigued. His eyes were closed and it looked

like he had fallen asleep, but at the same time, he didn't look asleep. He looked like he was paralyzed.

Xiao Lu brought over a document to him. "Director..."

Just as she was about to wake him up, Hou Ge, who was standing close by, stopped her. "Shh."

"Huh?" Xiao Lu looked at Hou Ge.

Hou Ge gave a wry smile. "Let Director Zhang rest for a bit."

Xiao Lu nodded and looked at the sofa. She felt a little bad for him but also wanted to laugh. After some thought, she suddenly took out her cell phone and opened the camera. After focusing for a long time, kacha, she took a picture of him.

Afterwards, the picture spread within the program team.

"Hahaha!"

"Zhang Ye's posture is the best!"

"Too funny!"

"Let's post it on the Internet."

"Alright, let me check with Brother Hu if we should do that."

When Hu Fei saw the picture, he immediately said, "Post it! Post it using the show's official Weibo account! Let everyone see how hard our program team's people are working!"

Soon, I Am a Singer's official Weibo posted the picture, with a caption: "A scene from behind the scenes. You've worked hard, Director Zhang." It was supposed to be a simple interaction with fans as well as a publicity post to promote their show a little. But the people of Beijing Television could not have expected that this picture would actually turn the entertainment industry upside down!

It was shared like crazy!

The netizens were all getting a laugh out of it!

"Aiyo!"

"Look at how ugly Zhang Ye's posture is!"

"Hahahaha! I'm dying!"

"Just looked at how he's lying down! There's really no one else who can look like that!"

"It looks so terrible!"

"I can see how this fellow must be burnt out!"

"His body must be drained!"

Out of the blue, countless netizens gave this posture a name: the Zhang Ye Sprawl!

Everyone was having fun parodying this. They Photoshopped the picture with other pictures and posted them online. It had almost become a movement that everyone was taking part in. Later, quite a few celebrities from the entertainment circle even joined in!

Zhang Xia posted a picture of herself in the "Zhang Ye Sprawl"!

"Pfft!"

"Even Grandma Zhang has joined in!"

"Hahahaha, Liked!"

Chen Guang also posted one.

"Old Chen's posture is too ugly!"

"I'm cramping up from laughing!"

And Yao Jiancai.

"Old Yao, you had better stop it!"

"How is this the Zhang Ye Sprawl? It's more like a Coffin Sprawl! I can see at a glance that you're not far from being in one soon!"

Ning Lan.

Huo Dongfang.

And many other celebrities were all imitating Zhang Ye's sprawl and posting their selfies to join in the memeing. All of a sudden, the Zhang Ye Sprawl had gone viral across the country!

The person at the center of it was the last to find out.

When Zhang Ye saw his inelegant picture being spread like crazy all over the Internet, he was dumbfounded. He was exhausted in the afternoon and had no idea that his picture was taken. The gesticulations of Beijing locals were already more ungainly to begin with, so he just lay down in the most comfortable position he could get into. But who could have guessed that it would become a meme? There were this many memes of him? So many celebrities had come to join the fun as well? Whoa! Even Zhang Yuanqi posted one of herself?

The people on Weibo went crazy!

"Ah!"

"Even the Heavenly Queen is here?"

"Hahahaha!"

"I think the Heavenly Queen's 'Zhang Ye Sprawl' is much more elegant and beautiful!"

"Zhang Ye is on fire again!"

"How does he keep doing this!"

"Because he's a wonder!"

The Zhang Ye Sprawl?

Wasn't this the same as the Ge You Sprawl?!

Zhang Ye didn't know what to say anymore. Hai, whatever makes you guys happy, I guess.

The picture of him in utter exhaustion had gone viral and made it into the Weibo headlines and the headlines of the major entertainment news outlets. He had gone viral all over the

country, to the point where even his popularity score had jumped by a bit. This was really something that could happen to no one but him!

Meanwhile.

The explosiveness of "The Hottest Ethnic Trend" had finally arrived!

This storm had come too suddenly and strongly. It could only be described as a state of hysteria!

...

In a neighborhood in Shanghai.

"The vast horizon is my love!"

"At the foot of rolling green hills flowers bloom!"

...

In a plaza in Shenzhen.

"Whichever rhythm..."

"...that is the most rocking!"

"Whichever singing is the most! Happy!"

...

Beijing.

"Singing as we travel is the most! Carefree!"

"If we sing, we want to sing to our! Hearts! Content!"

...

Sweeping!

Spreading!

In just a few days!

The wave of the plaza dance hysteria had swept across the entire country!

Beijing fell!

Shanghai fell!

Shenzhen fell!

Nanjing fell!

Hangzhou fell!

And to what state did the hysteria reach?

It reached a point where if you stepped out into the neighborhood, you'd hear "The Hottest Ethnic Trend" playing, to the point where if you went out, you'd see groups of aunties dancing their plaza dance routines!

The industry was shocked!

The people were stunned!

This was a change that had dumbfounded everyone!

This was way too crazy!

Th-This was simply insane!

Overnight, China had been overtaken by a plaza dance song called "The Hottest Ethnic Trend"!

Weibo was turned upside down!

"Heavens!"

"They've all gone mad! Mad, I tell you!"

"The aunties have all emerged!"

"At 7 AM and 7 PM, they're always so punctual!"

"My home has fallen!"

"The neighborhood I live in has fallen too!"

"Zhang Ye, your sister! Just what have you done!"

"Zhang Ye, you cheat!"

"That guy has opened up a door to a new world for the aunties!"

"Hahahahaha!"

"This is causing such a huge public disturbance! I'm on the verge of tears! Zhang Ye, come out!"

"Teacher Zhang, come out!"

"I really want to give him a good beating!"

"Is there a spell in this song?"

"There must be! And it's definitely a fucking spell that only works on the aunties!"

"Oh my God! The aunties have all gone mad!"

The media was fighting to get their first reports out!

The people had already started heated discussions!

In the end, even experts and government leaders stepped in. This had obviously already turned into a societal matter. No one could have expected that a song could actually bring about such a crazy situation. This was really something that was very difficult to imagine since it was only a song, a song that Zhang Ye had casually sung onstage!

Why was this happening?

How did it become like this?

The happiest people were those aunties who were retired and had nothing to do at home. All of them were very excited and were even praising Zhang Ye. Plaza dancing had always existed, and it was a very popular activity in many places as well. But there were only signs of this activity happening. It wasn't commonplace yet, nor did it happen on such a wide scale. With the release of "The Hottest Ethnic Trend," it was as though a bomb's switch had been flicked and it went off so explosively that the entire situation got out of control!

Plaza dancing had finally been unified and become popular all over the country!

In the past, the aunties would often get into arguments over what songs they wanted to dance to. There had been ongoing battles over the types of songs they preferred, with the list including folk songs, modern songs, and classic songs. They had never been united before!

Should they dance to this?

Or that?

Some of the groups in the neighborhoods would even get into fights over the topic!

But now?

There was no need to fight anymore!

"The Hottest Ethnic Trend" had arrived!

Deng, deng deng deng deng!

Deng deng deng deng deng deng deng!

Deng, deng deng deng deng, deng deng!

Chapter 1258: You call this a love song?

A few days later.

On the day of the ninth episode's recording.

The audience was joking and chatting as they entered the studio.

"The Zhang Ye Sprawl has gone viral."

"Yeah, everyone's imitating it now."

"And 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend' is causing a stir around the country."

"Let's see what Zhang Ye will be singing today."

"Yeah, he's definitely going to sing a proper song today, right?"

"Right. If he doesn't do that, that fellow will definitely get eliminated this round."

"Yep, the ninth and tenth episodes are going to be the last qualifying rounds before the grand finals take place. When these two episodes are done, it'll be time for the revival round. It's almost coming to an end."

"Do you guys think that Zhang Ye will advance to the grand finals?"

"If he sings the way he has been, don't even think about it!"

"Actually, I don't think he isn't singing properly. He's actually performed quite well, but you have to take into account who he's up against. Who are all those people with him on this stage? Xiaodong is more popular than Zhang Ye in the Asian scene. And I don't even have to mention Zhang Xia and Chen Guang. Those two are both top singers, pros amongst pros. Even if Zhang Ye gives it his all, he probably can't beat them. He won't even be able to match their singing skills, so this is very normal."

"But he beat Fan Wenli during King of Masked Singers."

"That was because they were masked. Everyone had already guessed the identities of the other masked singers except for The Clown, which was the decisive factor of why he could win. People are curious creatures, after all. Besides, even if Fan Wenli's singing is good, she's still lacking when compared to Chen Guang and Grandma Zhang. Surely you guys agree with that too, right? Moreover, Zhang Ye only won because of the songs that he sang during the King of Masked Singers. All of those songs had very deep meanings and were written well in advance. The audience only voted for him because of the songs. But such good songs are getting harder to come by and more difficult to write these days. Even for Zhang Ye, it's impossible that he can churn out a good song every other day. It would already be ridiculously amazing if he could produce three to five classics per year. So I feel that he overdrew his quota during King of Masked Singers. Just look at 'I Feel So Drained' and 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend.' What kinds of lyrics are those? Even the melody of the songs are so simple. From that, you can get a sense that Zhang Ye's talent has been totally spent. Since he isn't willing to sing the songs that he's sung before, nor those of others, how can he perform well? However, that's also understandable."

"That makes sense."

"True, how can it be so easy to always write good songs?"

"That might not be. We'll see what he sings today."

"Right, we'll know how it goes after today."

"In any case, I'll listen to whatever Zhang Ye sings. I just like him!"

"Who cares if he's lost his touch? It's good enough as long as the song is nice!"

"He's written a song that's become popular all over the country, and you're saying that he's lost his touch? Are you kidding me? It's just that Zhang Ye isn't singing seriously!"

...

Backstage.

Recording had already begun.

The singers were all gathered at the lot picking place and were surrounded by the program team staff and cameras.

"Let's welcome the replacement singer to the show."

"Welcome!"

"Thank you, seniors."

"Who's going to pick first?"

"Not me!"

"How about Grandma Zhang?"

"Me? I'll wait a bit."

Nobody wanted to be the first to pick a lot, so everyone was laughing and joking. The replacement singer for this episode was a C-list celebrity who could also be considered a newcomer to the music industry. He had only debuted two years ago.

Zhang Xia laughed and said, "Amy survived last week's knockout round again."

Amy laughed out loud. "That's because I've been proclaimed as the undying goddess."

Xiaodong mocked, "Well, you're more like an ever-LAST-ing angel!"

Amy did not like hearing that. "Heehee, but I wasn't in last place the previous week."

"So you guys are talking about me now?" Zhang Ye said in amusement. Zhao Wuliu was in seventh place the previous episode and got eliminated from the competition as a result. Excluding him, it wasn't wrong to say that Zhang Ye's sixth place put him in last place.

Huang Cheng laughed and said, "It was a really close call for Director Zhang."

Zhang Ye smiled. "Yeah, I was hanging by a thread."

Everyone actually had very serious questions regarding Zhang Ye's songs choices for the past two episodes. However, they did not think it would be nice to bring it up. What could they say? How could they ask? Could they ask if he couldn't come up with good songs anymore? Ask if he had run out of inspiration? Or ask if his singing had deteriorated? And why he couldn't sing like he did in the past? There was just no way to ask something like that!

Chen Guang looked quite relaxed. "The difference was only a dozen-odd votes, so that was really close. If Director Zhang were eliminated, we would be left without a host."

Zhang Xia looked at Chen Guang. "What are you going to sing today, Little Chen?"

Chen Guang laughed. "Can I keep it a secret for now?"

Amy immediately said, "No, you have to say it now!"

Chen Guang gave it some thought. "I can only say that it's a rock song; I can't reveal the name yet."

Xiaodong blinked. "What about you, Grandma Zhang?"

"Me?" Zhang Xia said, "I'll be singing a love song."

Amy went on to ask Zhang Ye, "Director Zhang, what kind of song will you be singing today?"

Zhang Ye was taken aback but gave a surprising answer, "I'll be singing a love song too."

Everyone was stunned.

A love song?

He was finally going to show what he was capable of?

Truthfully, they hadn't really heard Zhang Ye sing love songs

much even though that was his most powerful weapon of all. But whenever he did sing one, it would always be an earth-shattering performance. Like the duet he performed with Zhang Yuanqi, "Love of a Lifetime." It didn't sound like much when you listened to it for the first time, but it would slowly grow on you until you found it to be amazing. In fact, even a lot of industry insiders wrote great reviews of "Love of a Lifetime." They claimed that it was China's best love song this year with no other song coming close!

And today?

Zhang Ye was going to sing a love song again?

Was it going to be a new song too? Or would it be one of his old songs?

Originally, everyone was most concerned about Chen Guang and Zhang Xia's performances. Because these two singers were really strong, everyone wanted to defend against them by trying to find out in advance what they were going to sing so that they could prepare themselves. But when Zhang Ye mentioned that he was going to sing a love song, everyone was caught by surprise and started putting their guards up against him as well. One of the most important reasons for this was that the issue of Zhang Ye's wedding was really too attention-grabbing. Everyone was so curious about who his fiancée was since no one had seen her before. The paparazzi also couldn't find out anything about her, so it could be said that the entire country was still trying to figure out her identity. And to sing a love song at this time, was Zhang Ye going to dedicate it to his fiancée? Or perhaps reveal something about the course of their relationship? If that was the case, could you even imagine the stir that it would cause!

He might even be able to get first place because of it!

Zhang Ye smiled and went forward. "If no one is picking first, I'll go ahead."

He picked out a ball and unwrapped it.

Everyone looked down at it and was amused by what they saw!

"Hahaha!"

"Wow, Director Zhang."

"Seems like your luck isn't that great."

Zhang Ye did not know whether to laugh or cry. The number "1" was written on the ball. "OK, I'll be going onstage then."

The others also picked lots to determine their order of appearance.

Amy said, "I'll head back to the waiting room first. I can't miss out on listening to Director Zhang's love song."

Chen Guang said, "Let's go together."

Xiaodong gave a bitter laugh and said, "Director Zhang will surely be difficult to deal with today."

The tiger was finally baring its fangs, so what should they do?

...

In front.

The audience gave thunderous applause!

"Zhang Ye!"

"He came out!"

"It's starting!"

"I'm so looking forward to it!"

Zhang Ye stood onstage with a smile and said, "Welcome to this episode of I Am a Singer. For this episode, we will be welcoming a new replacement singer. Many of you are very concerned about who he is, and I've interviewed him backstage. He wanted me to pass a message to the audience..."

Before he could finish, the audience was already laughing like

crazy!

"Yi!"

"He's at it again!"

"Only a fool would believe you now!"

"There's no need to pass the message, we're not going to listen!"

"Hahahaha!"

"We already know about your tricks and routine!"

Everyone hooted.

The staff in the studio also laughed. Everyone already knows about this approach of yours!

But Zhang Ye just blinked and said, "The replacement singer wanted me to tell the audience: He will try to sing to the best of his abilities."

The audience was taken aback.

Try to sing to the best of his abilities?

Only that?

Eh, why wasn't there any advertising lines this time?

It didn't seem right! What happened to your advertising routine?

While everyone was caught by surprise, Zhang Ye's next words floored everyone. "But his agent wanted me to tell the audience this—" He lowered his head and brought up the cue card. "Thank you to the leading health supplement brand, Brain Gold Company, for being the title sponsors of our show. Thank you to Hubei Pharmaceuticals' strong support for us. If you're going to use a computer tablet, use Lilai's eight-inch tablet with multi-core technology. Honey Sweet fruit juice, so sweet that you can feel it in your heart!"

The audience burst out laughing!

The singers backstage also erupted with laughter!

"Pfft!"

"Hahahahaha!"

"I should have known!"

"He's full of tricks!"

"Zhang Ye, that's enough!"

"When it comes to such tricks, I really have to give it to you!"

It had already been proven that Zhang Ye's tricks could never be predicted by them.

After some hilarity, the atmosphere in the studio was warmed up.

Zhang Ye said, "Next up will be the performances. First up, our first singer will be performing a rare love song. So let's hand the stage over to him."

The audience looked at him doubtfully.

A love song?

What about that?

What was so rare about singing a love song?

But a second later, the lights dimmed.

Zhang Ye did not leave the stage but stayed at center stage in silence. At this moment, the audience finally realized it. Zhang Ye was singing first? And he was going to sing a love song?

The audience burst into an uproar.

"Wow!"

"A love song?"

"This is gonna be good!"

"Is he going to dedicate this to his fiancée?"

"I'm looking forward to hearing it!"

"Zhang Ye is gonna use his ace in the hole!"

"I have a feeling that he'll be getting first place this episode!"

"He's finally going to sing properly!"

"If he sings 'Love of a Lifetime,' he can definitely get into the top three today!"

"It's finally not going to be some viral tune! Singing a love song is the correct choice!"

"Viral tune? How can he have that many viral tunes up his sleeves!"

It was all quiet onstage.

The audience was also quiet.

Zhang Ye slowly closed his eyes as the image of Wu Zeqing floated into his mind.

Backstage.

Zhang Xia watched intently.

Xiaodong had her eyes glued to the screen while she was getting her makeup touched up.

Amy was feeling very nervous and full of anticipation.

What kind of performance would Zhang Ye, who had bared his fangs, give? They were all very curious to find out!

Onstage, Zhang Ye opened his eyes. Under everyone's gaze, the music suddenly came on. A strong beat ripped through the stage in an instant!

The audience was shocked. They suddenly had a bad feeling about this!

This music?

This beat?

Surely not, right?

In the end, everyone lurched the moment Zhang Ye opened his mouth!

"I planted a seed in the earth.

"And it finally bore fruit.

"Today is a glorious day.

"Plucked a star as a gift for you.

"Grabbed the moon as a gift for you.

"Making the sun rise every day for you.

"I turn into a candle and light myself to be a lamp for you.

"Give my everything to you as long as you are happy.

"Because of you, my tomorrows have become meaningful.

"Life may be short, but I'll love you forever— "Stay! By! Your! Side!

"You are my-a small-a, small apple!

"However much I love you, it'll never be too much!

"Your small blushing face warms my heart!

"It lights my fire! Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!"

Zhang Xia: "..."

Huang Cheng: "..."

Chen Guang: "..."

Xiaodong: "..."

Amy: "..."

The audience: "..."

Your sister!

Is this a love song?

You call this a fucking love song?!

Teacher Zhang! How did I fall for your nonsense!

Get lost!

Get lost already!

Chapter 1259: The father of plaza dancing?

The next day.

The show was broadcast.

Countless people were sitting in nervously at their televisions to catch the latest episode of I Am a Singer. When they learned that Zhang Ye was going to sing a love song, their reactions were exactly like how the live audience had reacted yesterday. They were all full of anticipation and surprise as they wanted to know just what kind of new love song Zhang Ye would come up with. And then—there were no more thens!

It crumbled!

It had once again crumbled!

The moment Zhang Ye opened his mouth, people across the country were stunned!

The expressions on people's faces were as excited as you would expect.

It lights your fire? Fire? Fire? Fire? Fire? Fire?

I'll fucking set your house aflame! Flame! Flame! Flame! Flame! Flame!

Teacher Zhang, that's enough! Do you believe that I won't set your house aflame!

"Lmao!"

"What a joker!"

"Aiyo, I give in! I really have to take my hat off to him!"

"Why does he still have more of those songs?

""Small Apple'?"

"This must be the fucking sequel to 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend,' right?"

"I want to go and give him a good beating, what do you guys think?"

"Me too!"

"Motherfucker, let's go together!"

"Does he think that the aunties do not have enough songs to dance to?"

"This had better not become yet another plaza dance tune in the making!"

"Surely not, right? The plaza dance scene has already been overtaken by 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend.'"

"Hopefully so, but I have a bad feeling about it!"

"It's impossible that this song can go viral. Zhang Ye has lost his touch."

"Yeah, that's what I think too. 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend' only became that popular by a stroke of luck. It was pure fortune that drove its popularity. Another miracle like it isn't going to happen. Just look and you'll know. Zhang Ye's ranking on this episode of I Am a Singer was sixth place. He only managed a few more votes than the replacement singer, so it's quite possible that he'll be facing elimination soon. And with the reception of the song only being lukewarm, Zhang Ye has totally gotten it wrong this time."

"The key was that the rookie replacement singer did not do as well as he could have. He still isn't that popular yet. How else could such a terrible song like 'Small Apple' not be in last place!"

"Hahaha, I think it's a great song!"

"Yeah, it's really nice and catchy, but it's not suitable for a competition."

But some people were still extremely excited!

Like Zhang Ye's mother!

Like Chen Guang's mother!

Like Xiaodong's mother!

Like Zhang Yuanqi's mother!

The aunties were all astounded and felt like they had discovered a gem!

There were all kinds of analysis and reviews online. Some were critical, while others poked fun or laughed at it. The opinions were divided, but the general consensus from the majority of the people was that they did not feel optimistic about the chances of this song in the market.

But reality once again slapped everyone in the face!

On the very next day, the plaza dance moves for "Small Apple" were released!

...

Beijing.

In a certain neighborhood.

A couple was leaving the house in the morning to go to work. The moment they stepped out, they were shocked by the scene outside.

"You are my-a small-a, small apple!"

"However much I love you, it'll never be too much!"

"No, that posture is wrong!"

"Follow me and repeat it!"

"One, two, three, four."

"Two, two, three, four."

...

Shanghai.

"Listen to the beat!"

"Yes, wave your hand, place it down, then wave your hand again!"

"Everyone, let's do it together!"

"It lights my fire! Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!"

...

Tianjin.

In a certain town square.

On one side of it.

Deng, deng deng deng deng!

Deng deng deng deng deng deng deng!

On the other side was.

"Life may be short, but I'll love you forever— "Stay! By! Your! Side!"

...

There were countless versions of the dance!

There was a Chenhua Neighborhood version!

There was a Shanghai version!

There was a Beijing Xicheng District version!

There was even a certain Shenzhen street version!

Every district's movements might differ slightly from each other, but the songs were the same. They were all playing "The Hottest Ethnic Trend" or "Small Apple." Further, the popularity of these two songs were practically on par with each other, with 50% of the plaza dancers dancing to either one of them!

Countless young men and women nearly broke down when they saw the sight before their eyes!

The media was dumbfounded!

The experts were stunned as well!

"Yet another viral song by Zhang Ye!"

"'Small Apple' stuns the people!"

"A new song for plaza dancing: 'Small Apple'!"

"'Small Apple' spreads across the country overnight!"

"If you didn't hear the song, 'Small Apple,' this morning when you opened your doors, you must definitely be living in the faraway suburbs. The cities have all been invaded by 'Small Apple'!"

"The suburbs have also been invaded this afternoon!"

"Yet another miracle!"

"The sudden rise of 'Small Apple'!"

"The 'Small Apple' craze! All the aunties go crazy!"

"China has entered the era of plaza dancing!"

"Plaza dancing to become a norm in the future!"

"Leaders of the local governments have expressed plans to support and promote a fitness dance for the elderly!"

"How did 'Small Apple' manage to go viral?"

"Mother of Heavenly Queen Zhang Yuanqi publicly declares: 'I like Zhang Ye's songs very much!'"

"An expert with the Center of Gerontology and Geriatrics expresses: Thank you, Zhang Ye, for contributing to the leisure activities of senior citizens!"

There was news all around!

It sent shockwaves all over the country!

A lot of people thought "The Hottest Ethnic Trend" had already spread out of control and that no other song would be able to surpass it, nor would such a miracle be replicated. But to their

surprise, Zhang Ye, the bastard, had actually brought it to the next level. He had come up with a song that could match "The Hottest Ethnic Trend" in terms of its viralness—"Small Apple"! If the folk song before this could not prove anything, then with the appearance of "Small Apple," it was enough to officially declare this: China had truly entered the era of plaza dancing! No one could stop it!

But the person who started it remained very calm.

"The Hottest Ethnic Trend" had already gone viral!

So would it still be long before "Small Apple" caught up to it?

These two songs were considered the number one heroic couple of plaza dancing back in his previous world!

The only opponent of "The Hottest Ethnic Trend" was "Small Apple"!

"Small Apple" had only one opponent, which was also "The Hottest Ethnic Trend"!

Other than that, they had practically no rivals at all!

Zhang Ye, though, was at his wits' end. In the end, plaza dancing was still gloriously brought to life by this bro. Perhaps this was what you would call fate? I'm really not to blame for this. Everything was destined and this was a product of the societal development in this world. This bro was only acting as a catalyst for it.

...

On the same night.

Zhang Ye's name was actually brought up on Central TV's News Simulcast!

Ever since Zhang Ye got involved in a lawsuit with Central TV Department 1, Central TV no longer made any references to Zhang Ye's news. There was practically no mention of him on News

Simulcast, and they would remain silent even if he made any major news. But today, News Simulcast was reporting about the topic of plaza dancing and the male and female news anchors actually read Zhang Ye's name aloud in front of the entire country's viewers. This was clearly a big change from before. Central TV had recently gone through a leadership change, and it seemed like the effects were widespread. Just this incident today was enough to see that. It looked like the newly appointed Central TV Station Head had nothing against Zhang Ye. They would report on any news that was trending without bias.

On News Simulcast.

There was an interview with a passerby.

But this interview resulted in making the entire country's people erupt with laughter!

The female reporter walked into the plaza dance community and raised her microphone to ask, "Auntie, what type of dance are you all dancing?"

The auntie answered with a smile, "We're plaza dancing!"

The female reporter asked, "And what is this song that everyone is dancing to?"

That auntie answered, "This is 'Small Apple.' 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend' will be played afterwards. We're all dancing to these two songs over and over again."

Beside them, there were over a dozen aunties chattering.

A plump auntie said, "This song is especially good."

A grey-haired auntie said, "Yes, I fell in love with it the moment I heard it."

A skinny auntie said, "We're all retired and usually at home, but there's finally something for us to do now."

A 60-year-old auntie said, "Yeah, we sisters are really happy to be

able to dance together."

An auntie wearing a colorful shirt said, "I was arguing almost every day with my husband when I was at home because I had nothing to do. But it has gotten so much better now. Every morning and evening, I can come out to take part in plaza dancing. I practically have no worries anymore!"

The female reporter asked, "Did any of the neighbors complain about any disturbances?"

The leading auntie of the group walked over. It was obvious she was the head of the group. She said, "There were some complaints, but we're not unreasonable people. When they say that we're being too loud and affecting their sleep, we turn down the volume and try not to affect them. But of course, there are also some fellow sisters in the neighborhoods who are pretty unreasonable and cause a nuisance to the people. That's why we would like to take the chance to remind everyone here. When we're entertaining ourselves, we have to be considerate of other people's feelings too. We cannot build our happiness upon others' misfortunes, am I right?"

The female reporter laughed and said, "Well said!"

The leading auntie proudly declared, "That's right. We're preparing to treat plaza dancing as a career and make it an industry that we can develop further."

An industry?

You can even make it into an industry?

The female reporter didn't know whether to laugh or cry. She said, "Any industry has to have a founder first. There's always an ancestral founder, so is there one for plaza dancing as well?"

That leading auntie was taken aback at that. Clearly, she had never considered this question before. Thus, she answered instinctively, "Of course there is. The father of plaza dancing is

Zhang Ye!"

The interview ended right there.

This was an excerpt of the content on News Simulcast today!

The public was cramping up with laughter after watching this!

Coincidentally, Zhang Ye was also watching News Simulcast with his parents today. When he saw that interview, Zhang Ye very nearly fell on his butt!

Father?

Who the heck is your founder!

What the fuck has this got anything to do with me?!

Chapter 1260: The founder imparts his moves!

Back at home.

His parents were also dumbfounded!

His mother turned to the side and asked, "Since when did you become the father of plaza dancing?"

Zhang Ye nearly vomited a mouthful of blood. "How would I know?"

His father: "..."

A phone call arrived at the next moment.

It was Yao Jiancai who called first.

The moment Zhang Ye answered it, he heard a guffaw from the other end.

"Hahahahaha!"

Zhang Ye was annoyed. "What is it, Old Yao?"

"Did you watch News Simulcast just now? Hahahaha! You're great, you're really great, kid! Aiyo, you're killing me. Let me laugh a little more!"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "You better not go overboard."

"I can't, this is really too funny!"

Soon after, another call came in.

It was from his university classmate, Yu Yingyi. "Hello, father of plaza dancing."

Zhang Ye was speechless. "Go away!"

Yu Yingyi laughed loudly. "Your popularity amongst the middle-aged and elderly women is skyrocketing. My mother even called me today to ask me to get an autograph from you. She said that the

aunties in her neighborhood have become your diehard fans. Keep this in mind. When I'm a little less busy, I'll be looking for you, so don't forget to sign a few more autographs for me!"

Zhang Ye said in spite: "No, I'm not giving you any."

The calls kept coming one after another.

His old friends and old classmates were all calling to mock him.

But there was nothing that Zhang Ye could do about it. He was completely speechless. Plaza dancing had also gained notoriety back in his previous world and its reputation was really bad. Zhang Ye didn't mind joking around or singing a song or two for others, but if he had to get linked to the legacy of plaza dancing, this fellow would definitely try to get away as far from it as possible. This was not something that he wanted to get blamed for! But out of nowhere, someone bestowed the title of the founder upon him. This left Zhang Ye with no place to hide. He had really been wrongfully given this title!

Abracadabra!

Please let this matter blow over quickly!

Hopefully, no one will take this joke seriously!

...

However, the development of this matter went precisely the opposite of how Zhang Ye hoped it would turn out!

What was News Simulcast?

It was the show with the highest viewership ratings without counting the Spring Festival Gala. If the total viewership ratings were combined, no other shows would dare to claim that they were number one if News Simulcast said that they were number two. The Central TV Spring Festival Gala only happened once a year, but News Simulcast was broadcast every day. And it was even a mandatory broadcast that played on all the satellite channels

across the country. Comparing viewership ratings? Comparing viewership numbers? Even I Am a Singer or King of Masked Singers would have to step aside. The gap was simply too wide!

That part of the interview spread like wildfire in the blink of an eye!

On Weibo, the netizens were all laughing like mad!

"Quickly go and watch News Simulcast!"

"The interview segment today was so lit! It was lit af!"

"Hahahahaha!"

"Aiyah, I can't take it anymore!"

"Founder?"

"I somehow got tickled by that!"

"That auntie is such a comedian!"

"Teacher Zhang has created a new industry! This is cause for a nationwide celebration!"

"Pfft, but thinking about it, those two songs of Zhang Ye's have indeed gloriously spread the name of plaza dancing. Even my mother who doesn't usually go out went out to dance, so just think of how great his influence is. Calling Zhang Ye the father of plaza dancing? I don't find anything wrong with that at all!"

"Teacher Zhang has gained yet another nickname!"

"A founder has to be offered joss sticks by future generations, right?"

"That's right. A hundred years from now, every neighborhood's plaza dance groups will have to offer three joss sticks to Zhang Ye's photograph to remember him before they start their dance routine."

"Rofl!"

"Hahaha, you guys, that's enough!"

"I really have to take my hat off to him. Why is it that when anything involves Zhang Ye, it always somehow becomes a joke of some sort. Just this morning, 'Small Apple' and 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend' were playing below my place. I got woken up by it and was feeling quite angry about it, but when I saw that interview on News Simulcast, all my anger fucking disappeared. I laughed for such a long time at it. In all of showbiz, only Zhang Ye can make me feel that way!"

"He's the biggest joker in the entertainment industry, after all, so the people and issues surrounding him would naturally become funny as well. Perhaps this is what Zhang Ye's personal charm is. Based on looks, he can't compare with Huo Dongfang or the others. Comparing age, he isn't like those pretty boy celebs out there. About his physique, Jiang Hanwei could easily fling him several streets. But when it comes to being funny, even if all the other celebrities in the entertainment industry combined forces, they wouldn't be a match for him!"

"Congratulations to Zhang Ye on his promotion to the father of plaza dancing!"

"Congratulations to Teacher Zhang on becoming the spiritual leader of the aunties!"

"Where's the applause?"

"Tossing flowers!"

The netizens were all gloating and laughing like mad!

Just a simple news interview had firmly placed the label of "father of plaza dancing" onto Zhang Ye. Even the media was using this title for their headlines.

...

The next day.

In the morning.

When Zhang Ye got up, he could already hear his mother playing "Small Apple" on the computer. He couldn't help but get annoyed at that, so he pushed the door open and said, "Mom, can you please stop playing that?"

His mother smacked her lips. "Why?"

Zhang Ye said, "I get a headache whenever I hear that song."

"Did you get possessed?" His mother sneered.

Zhang Ye harrumphed. "In the future, don't ever mention plaza dancing to me again."

His father said, "But you're already looked upon as the founder by so many people."

"Whoa!" Zhang Ye reacted as though his tail had been stepped on. He said startled, "Just stop mentioning those words! Don't ever bring it up again! I've contracted a disease. If I hear those words, my entire body will start trembling. So don't ever mention them to my face again. Dad, Mom, I'm off to work now. Bye!"

But Zhang Ye could not have expected that the moment he got downstairs, he would immediately be surrounded by his neighbors!

"Little Ye!"

"You've finally come out!"

"We've been waiting for you for so long."

"Quick, give us some pointers."

"Yeah, everyone's moves are not uniform at all."

"What are the standard moves for 'Small Apple'?"

"Can you teach us the moves for 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend' as well?"

A group of aunties had completely surrounded Zhang Ye. There was no way out for him.

Standard moves?

Whoever said that there were any standard moves!

Zhang Ye said dumbfoundedly, "Auntie Liu, Auntie Sun, Grandma Zhou, what are you all talking about? How would I know how to plaza dance? I can't possibly teach you all anything."

Auntie Sun said with a straight face, "But you're the founder of this industry. If you don't teach us, who'll teach us?"

Auntie!

My dearest auntie!

Can you not bring up the fact of who the founder is?

Zhang Ye really did not want anything to do with this. He just wanted to get out of here.

But the group of aunties was not going to allow him to get past them. They all had their hands on their hips as they stared at him.

"Little Ye, Auntie really has to lecture you!"

"Little Ye, everyone is feeling so excited now. We're all so happy that we can come out every day to dance. It's a different world these days, with things like the Internet, cell phones, and computers. We don't know how to use any of them. We're just a group of middle-aged and elderly people with few leisure activities to keep us occupied. There's really too little that we can do. But now that plaza dancing has been popularized despite the difficulties, it has helped to enrich the lives of us old folk. This is great, and if the others don't wish to support it, then so be it. But you're the creator of it and our spiritual leader, so how can you not show your support?"

"That's right, Little Ye."

Who's your spiritual leader?

What spiritual leader!

Zhang Ye raised his hands in surrender. "It's not that I don't support it. I'm actually especially supportive of this cause. I even have both my hands up in support of it, but I'm only a small-time host and at most an amateur singer. What could I know about dancing!"

But nobody was having it.

"You've even flown a plane before!"

"And gotten the highest award in mathematics too!"

"You can play Go and even Xiang Rong is no match for you!"

"So what would you not know?"

They were all saying things.

Zhang Ye couldn't rebuke any of them!

His mother probably heard the ruckus from upstairs and came down looking cheerful too.

Zhang Ye really didn't know whether to laugh or cry. These were not just any people, they were all decades-old neighbors, and many of these aunties saw Zhang Ye grow up. Some of them had cooked for him, and some of them even brought him home from school when his parents couldn't. What kind of relationship was that? It was close to the point of being relatives! No matter how thick Zhang Ye's skin was, he couldn't just ignore these neighbors.

Finally, he gave in. "Alright, but I'll only teach it once for both songs. I still have a load of things to do at the TV station, so I have to get going as soon as possible."

"No problem!"

"We learn really fast!"

The aunties were in high spirits!

But Zhang Ye appeared despondent with a listless expression.

If he really didn't know how, then it wouldn't have been so bad.

He could still come up with an excuse and push this off. But the problem was that Zhang Ye really knew the dance routine of the songs. In his previous world, the State General Administration of Sports had pushed out 20 standard plaza dance moves. Zhang Ye did not learn them, but that didn't stop him from seeing it almost every day, for months and even years. Just bringing up "The Hottest Ethnic Trend" and "Small Apple," he could remember the moves to these two songs even with his eyes closed. There wasn't even a need to use the Memory Search Capsules!

Search it from his memories?

Are you kidding?

This would be the greatest insult that you could give to the people living in his previous world!

The coaching began.

"For the first move, do it this way."

"Right, that's very good."

"The second move will be like this."

"No, that's not it, Auntie Sun."

"Auntie Zhang, that's really good. Everyone, please learn from Auntie Zhang."

"When it gets to this part of the song, you must all remember to turn around."

"Aiya, Auntie Zhou, you've gotten it wrong again."

"Auntie Chen, this move that you did was wrong. It's totally unlike what I taught you. Can you please concentrate?"

"Yo, you all did pretty well this time. Auntie Chen and Auntie Zhou, you both deserve praise!"

"Dancing is the most beautiful activity in the world, so you must learn how to relax your movements. Yes, just imagine that you're

surrounded by blue sky and are dancing within the fluffy, white clouds. Don't relax your standards just because this is plaza dancing. That would be the greatest mistake of all! You have to treat it like art. Who says that plaza dancing cannot be beautiful? The dance of the people is always the most beautiful! The efforts of the people, that's what art is! Right, this is it. Very good, everyone is doing quite well!"

His mother was learning as well.

Zhang Ye always took things very seriously. Coupled with the fact that he was also a university teacher, he lost track of time as he taught everyone the dance moves. An hour passed, but he was still teaching the steps for those two songs to everyone. Further, he was beginning to teach them in much greater detail, and he was even giving everyone a lot of attention. For some of the moves, when some people just could not get them right no matter how they tried, he would give them a hard stare. He turned into a professional dance teacher!

Time went by very quickly.

They finally finished learning the moves for the two songs.

The aunties were all celebrating.

"It's awesome!"

"I still prefer the moves that Little Ye taught us!"

"That's right, they're logical and look good as well!"

"He's very professional!"

"That's true. Our Little Ye is the father of plaza dancing, after all!"

All of a sudden, Zhang Ye had a realization. He got stunned for several seconds before he looked up into the sky and nearly burst into tears!

Oh my God!

What the fuck am I doing!

Chapter 1261: The tenth episode begins recording!

In the following few days.

A short video clip that was taken by a bystander had stealthily been shared like crazy. Zhang Ye featured impressively in the video and was seen leading a group of aunties dancing to "Small Apple" in an open space garden in a neighborhood. He was also occasionally dishing out guidance and pointers for the dance moves. There were even the plaza dance moves for The Hottest Ethnic Trend seen during the last 10 minutes of the video.

"Who says that plaza dancing cannot be beautiful?"

"The dance of the people is always the most beautiful!"

"The efforts of the people, that's what art is!"

In the video, Zhang Ye was constantly speaking like he was giving a lecture.

On Weibo.

"Ah, is that Zhang Ye?"

"This fellow is teaching dancing?"

"Does he know how to dance?"

"Fuck, these moves really look standard!"

"Zhang Ye is the top A-list celebrity in the country, but he seems to be doing really well at the grassroots level too?"

"faints This fellow has really become the founder?"

"Lord Zhang, I'll kneel to you!"

"Yeah, hahahaha, he's even teaching others the dance now!"

"It looks like it's a full set of moves!"

"But honestly speaking, this version by Zhang Ye really looks

pretty good."

"Yep, every move is simple but carries a deep meaning. The choreography is very logical too."

"But if he has the time to do this, why doesn't he go and write better songs? Why is he expanding into the field of plaza dance? Teacher Zhang, can we focus on the proper business first, please?"

"Shouldn't you know Zhang Ye by now? His most proper business is having no proper business!"

The views on the clip soared!

1 million!

5 million!

10 million!

20 million!

A lot of people had come to watch in curiosity. They became more and more amused as they watched on, thinking how this weirdo Zhang Ye was always able to do something that no one could expect!

The impact of this clip was huge too!

The most direct effect it brought about was that the entire country's aunties were all starting to learn this version's plaza dance routine by Zhang Ye!

A Downtown Tianjin version?

The Xicheng District version?

A Shanghai suburbs version?

They all disappeared!

Beijing fell!

Shanghai fell!

Tianjin fell!

Nanjing fell!

All of those versions had been unified!

There was no need to fight over it anymore!

With the founder imparting his moves, they were all learning the most proper version of the dance!

At that moment, people in neighborhoods and plazas all over the country started dancing to Zhang Ye's version of "Small Apple" and "The Hottest Ethnic Trend." There was no longer a different set of moves seen!

The media interviews were endless.

The aunties gave a very good evaluation.

"Teacher Little Zhang is amazing!"

"This dance is good, it's really good."

"We've danced it a few times already, but no one's feeling tired yet."

"That's right. Our neighborhood's version of the dance was too tiring to keep up with. The motions were too big, and there were even some moves that those of us who are older could not perform. But this version by Teacher Little Zhang is really up there. Every move feels comfortable to execute, and they're even beautiful to look at when we're dancing to it!"

"Everyone here really loves this set of dance moves!"

"We've never chased after celebrities in the past as we felt that it was something that only young people would do. But today, all of us sisters have become particularly fond of Zhang Ye. We also catch every episode of his show each week.

"Little Zhang is truly a good celebrity. He understands what we older people like."

"He's basically our spiritual leader!"

"He is the spokesperson for us middle-aged and elderly women!"

Another dance craze was sweeping the nation!

In the end, even the official Weibo of the Sports Administration Liked that clip.

Even an official from the Sports Administration came forward to give an interview. He reaffirmed this set of dance moves by Zhang Ye and expressed that they had also gotten experts in the field to analyze and come up with a set of dance moves. However, they could not come up with anything good. It was only after they saw this clip that they realized Zhang Ye's version was more logical. Afterwards, the officials also started promoting it and suggested that the middle-aged and elderly learn Zhang Ye's version of the dance. They should also stop dancing to those self-choreographed moves as it might not match well with their physicality and could cause them to get injured. After all, plaza dancing was considered a body strengthening exercise, so of course it had to meet the scientific and health standards set by the authorities.

With that, Zhang Ye's plaza dance version became even more popular!

It was officially endorsed by the Sports Administration!

In the past, Zhang Ye and the sports world had conflicts, and he even scolded one of their executives. But during the Olympics, Zhang Ye had sung praise of the sports world and also helped the Chinese athletes seek justice over unfair refereeing, even to the point of tussling with the foreign referees. This eased the relationship between Zhang Ye and the sports world, leading them into a honeymoon phase.

Some people rejoiced while others were in sorrow.

But for Zhang Ye, he was both rejoicing and feeling sorrowful.

He was rejoicing about this large group of fans that was made up of these Chinese aunties. Their appearance and attention would

undoubtedly be crucial in helping Zhang Ye raise his popularity. But at the same time, it was also very worrying. Having experienced the plaza dance "storm" of his world, Zhang Ye knew this was a double-edged sword. It could harm his enemies but also injure himself. If anything went awry and caused a conflict on a large scale, he would have to be the one to bear the blame for it!

Founder?

Spokesperson?

Spiritual leader?

The moment Zhang Ye taught his old neighbors how to dance, these labels firmly became his!

You sang the songs?

And you taught the dance as well?

And even suggested that plaza dancing was a guiding principle for the people's art?

Damn! If you aren't the fucking founder, then who would be!

Zhang Ye wouldn't be able to rid himself of those labels even if he jumped into the Yellow River to try to wash them off. These names would probably follow him throughout his life as he became the "specialist" scapegoat of the plaza dance industry. Just thinking about that gave him a throbbing headache. Hai, come what may. It was more important to gain the popularity that he needed before anything else. At least, he thought so to lessen his bitterness.

...

At Beijing Television.

In the program team.

The new episode's recording was about to begin.

When they saw that Zhang Ye had just arrived, many of them started teasing him.

"Director Zhang, you've become famous again."

"When did you learn how to dance? That was so professional."

"Brother Hu informed us just now that the station has decided to get us to dance to 'Small Apple' at Beijing TV's annual party in two months' time. Why don't you teach us a few moves later?"

Zhang Ye grunted listlessly.

From a distance away, Chen Guang, Xiaodong, and the others came over.

"Director Zhang, what are you going to sing today?" Chen Guang asked with a laugh.

Xiaodong giggled and said, "Zhang'er, don't tell me you're going to sing another plaza dance tune?"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "Why would I sing another?"

One was "plaza dancing."

The other was "founder."

Zhang Ye was sick of these two phrases. Just hearing them get mentioned was enough to send a shiver down his spine!

Amy said happily, "You better be careful. This episode is the knockout round."

Zhang Ye said, "I can't sing whatever for this episode. I've selected a good song this time after thinking it through. I finally realized that it is better to sing a song with more depth and substance to it."

Xiaodong was flabbergasted. "You mean you've only just realized? That should have always been the way."

Chen Guang said in a speechless manner, "So it's finally gotten through to you!"

Zhang Ye grunted, "Mmm, let's not talk anymore. Everyone, quickly go and get your makeup done. We'll start recording soon,

and I want to rest my vocal chords a little too. It won't be easy to sing the song that I've chosen for today."

Zhang Xia came over. "Is it very difficult?"

"Yes, it won't be easy to sing." Zhang Ye nodded with a wry smile.

Zhang Xia reassured him, "It shouldn't be a problem with the singing skills that you have. The crucial part is the song selection. As long as it has substance, it'll be alright even if you don't sing it flawlessly. The audience will definitely be able to accept it, and you'll gain a few extra points too."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I hope so."

Chapter 1262: The difference between a veteran and a newbie!

On the stage.

Zhang Ye was the fifth singer to perform.

When the instruments were finally brought up onto the stage, around eight musicians sat down at them. At this moment, it felt like everyone in the studio was holding their breath.

A sheng?

A dizi?

A cello?

A yangqin?

What were all these for?

What was with this grand setup?

Some of those in the audience even recognized the musicians!

"Look!"

"Chen Di? He's that famous cellist!"

"Old Zhao? The great yangqin percussionist!"

"Sun Li? The famous folk music master?"

"They're all big names!"

"Damn, what a big move!"

"Zhang Ye has invited this many musicians onto the show?"

"How awesome is this!"

"This is gonna be great!"

"Zhang Ye has finally come to his senses. He's not going to sing a plaza dance tune!"

The audience was shocked by this lineup!

The singers backstage were also shocked. It was only now that they believed Zhang Ye was doing something big. Every one of those instruments was full of killing intent. These musicians were all capable of putting on a solo show by themselves. By convincing so many of them to come onstage to play for him, one could only wonder what kind of song Zhang Ye had used to convince them. They were all masters who could not be invited with money alone!

There was a bit of shock on Zhang Xia's face.

Xiaodong straightened up a little in her seat.

Chen Guang starting leaning forward as he kept his eyes on the screen.

Everyone was staring at Zhang Ye and the folk music musicians onstage in the most anticipated of ways, waiting for their stunning performance to begin.

The song began.

The accompaniment played suddenly.

Zhang Ye instantly looked lively. With a droop of his eyelids, he got into the groove of the song and looked like he couldn't free himself.

The sound of the yangqin was a constant presence!

The tempo got faster and faster!

Then Zhang Ye abruptly started singing.

"Ahhh, ohhh!

"Ahhhhhhh, oh ay!

"Ah seh dee, ah seh doh!

"Ah seh da geh dee ga doh!

"Ah seh dee, ah seh da geh dooooh!

"Ahhh, ohhh!

"Ahhhhhhh, oh ay!"

Chen Guang was dumbfounded!

Amy was in complete wonder!

Xiaodong was also staring wide-eyed in disbelief!

Director Zhang!

Was this what you meant by substance?

Was this what you meant by depth?

I'm gonna faint!

Why don't you just ascend to the Heavens!

Why don't you just fly out into the universe!

But Zhang Ye was incredibly invested in his singing.

"Ah seh dee, ah seh doh!

"Ah seh da geh dee ga doh!

"Ah seh dee, ah seh da geh dooooooh!

"Ahh—

"Ahh—

"Ahh—

"Ahh—

"Ah ya yo!

"Ah ya yo!"

The audience was also staggered!

So this was Zhang Ye's big move? It was another song without any lyrics? There was only vocalizing? Zhang Ye, you are really something! Do you still have any seriousness left in you!

A lot of people started laughing hard as they listened!

Some of them found it interesting.

Some of them found it hilarious.

Everyone thought that Zhang Ye was trying to be funny, but no one seemed to have noticed that tinge of seriousness in Zhang Ye's eyes. He was really trying his best. Perhaps only Huang Cheng had somewhat realized it.

Backstage.

The singers who already performed were all seated together.

Amy said, "This song's title is 'Perturbed'? Pfft, it really is perturbing! It makes me unable to sit still as a listener. That's really enough, Zhang Ye!"

Xiaodong smiled and said, "I really have nothing I can say about him anymore."

Chen Guang said helplessly, "It looks like Director Zhang is having so much fun."

Hearing them say that, Huang Cheng suddenly said, "He's not playing around."

Chen Guang was taken aback. "Huh?"

Huang Cheng said sternly, "I also play an instrument myself, so I'm more sensitive of the emotions the instruments portray. Can't you all see it? All of those musicians onstage are really focused, especially Zhang Ye. He isn't playing around, nor is he trying to be funny. He's actually singing very seriously."

Singing seriously?

How does this song have anything to do with being serious?

Nobody could really understand.

Onstage, the performance came to an end.

The audience was ridiculing him.

"I really have to hand it to him!"

"To think that I believed that he was coming up with something big!"

"I'd be a fool to believe him again!"

"Hahahaha! Hurry up and eliminate him, I've had enough already!"

"Yeah, we mustn't vote for Zhang Ye. Let's vote for someone else!"

"Just let this fellow be eliminated. If not, I'd surely laugh myself to death eventually!"

"Let's allow Zhang Ye to rest in peace."

"Yep, yep."

"But why do I find the song to be not that bad?"

"Get lost, what do you mean it's not that bad!"

"From a certain perspective, this song has indeed shocked the studio. It's just that it's not the same kind of shock that we got from Chen Guang and Xiaodong's performances. It's an entirely different thing!"

"I just like Zhang Ye. He's really too good at bringing laughter to people!"

"Yeah, any place with him will never be missing fun."

"He's having so much fun that it feels like he's at a karaoke session!"

"Yeah, this is completely not a competition type song. It's more like a song to warm the audience up. We mustn't let this fellow through to the grand finals. Otherwise, who knows what kind of stunt he'll pull again!"

"But that's what I want to see!"

"I'm also quite looking forward to what Zhang Ye will sing in the grand finals."

"Grand finals, my ass. With a song like this? It'll be a miracle if he can even get into the grand finals!"

"Yeah, he was already in sixth place last episode."

The audience was coming up with all kinds of possibilities.

The next singer to appear was the replacement singer from last week.

But the moment he opened his mouth to sing, he made a mistake. His voice cracked when he attempted a high note in his song. By rights, this was very normal, and no singer could guarantee that every performance of theirs would be perfect. But because of this replacement singer's inexperience in the industry and onstage, coupled with the fact that he was still considered a newcomer, this voice cracking incident caused him to lose his rhythm. He forced himself to finish singing with a hint of self-blame and regret.

Backstage, Chen Guang, Xiaodong, and everyone else were sympathizing with him. Among the newcomers, this singer was truly one of the more capable ones who could sing without rushing. He had the vocals and the ability to back it up too. What he lacked was only an opportunity, some good songs, and a little stage experience. Otherwise, there would surely be a spot for him among the top singers of the music industry. But it seemed like this stage might have been too big for him. He had taken a step up too quickly. Sometimes, pressure could push a person forward. For example, no stage seemed too big for Zhang Ye, and he was always able to bear the pressure no matter how great it was. Even the fiercest of criticism did not faze him. This was also the reason why Zhang Ye could make it to where he was today. But for many people, they lacked such an ability. If there was too much pressure, it would make them so nervous they would break down when facing it.

The audience also felt pity.

"Your sister!"

"That was such a huge mistake!"

"I guess Zhang Ye will be advancing into the grand finals then?"

"That fellow's luck is too good!"

"This replacement singer couldn't live up to his hype!"

"Hai, this newbie is really lousy at withstanding the pressure."

"If there's anyone who's the best at withstanding pressure in the entertainment industry, it has got to be Zhang Ye. If it were anyone else who went onstage to sing that song, I'm sure their faces would be flushed completely red. But look at Zhang Ye? He just finished singing the song without a trace of embarrassment. Just how thick does his skin have to be? This fellow is really not afraid of people scolding him"

"Who can compare with him?"

"He's just shameless, haha!"

"You can see the difference between a veteran and a newbie from this!"

The performances ended after everyone had their turn.

The rankings were announced.

First: Chen Guang

Second: Zhang Xia

Third: Xiaodong

Fourth: Huang Cheng

Fifth: Amy

Sixth: Zhang Ye

Seventh: Li Naran

The replacement singer came in at seventh place over the two episodes and was eliminated.

Being in the second to last place, Zhang Ye had narrowly

qualified for the grand finals of I Am a Singer!

Chapter 1263: The eve of the grand finals!

The next day.

The tenth episode of I Am a Singer was broadcast.

Countless people were waiting before their television sets.

This episode was going to be very exciting as all the singers were fighting to get a place in the grand finals. All of them gave it their all and brought out their specialty skills for the performances. Zhang Xia surprisingly performed a rock song, while Chen Guang sang an emotionally charged love song and dedicated it to his wife, Fan Wenli. Xiaodong explosively leveled up her singing by performing an old classic to perfection. Even Amy managed to pull herself out of last place with her rap song shocking many people. Every line's delivery was fast and good as she showcased a strong ability that even a lot pro rappers could not achieve. Only the replacement singer failed to perform to expectations and had to miss out on the grand finals of the show.

As for Zhang Ye?

This fellow was still the same as before!

"That was so wonderful!"

"This episode is the best!"

"Yeah, the songs are great!"

"They're all powerhouses, all of them are extremely capable singers!"

The audience was very excited!

The evaluation from the industry was also extremely good!

Some people were amazed by Zhang Xia's song.

Some people were moved by Chen Guang's song.

And some people were touched by how tenacious Amy was.

But no one could have guessed that the most popular song of the tenth episode was none of their songs. It just had to be that goddamn song Zhang Ye sang, "Perturbed," which left everyone at their wits' end!

Another viral tune was created!

It swept across the nation!

The moment "Perturbed" appeared, it took a spot on practically all of the music charts!

The netizens broke down once again.

"Again?"

"Oh my God!"

"Why is this happening?"

"His song has made it onto so many of the music charts again?"

"This crappy song can even get number one?"

"Wasn't he just randomly humming? I can do that too!"

"Hahaha, I've finally realized something. Zhang Ye is only here to be funny!"

"It's a catchy song, so of course it would spread fast. But that's not important. Just refer to the rankings and you'll know, Zhang Ye was still placed in the bottom two."

"I'm not optimistic about Zhang Ye in the grand finals."

"Who's optimistic about him, the fraud!"

"It's a miracle that he scraped into the grand finals, haha!"

"Yeah, that guy should've been eliminated long ago. Who could have thought that he would make it into the grand finals by stumbling through the competition in either last or second to last place every time? That was super unexpected."

"There's still Zhang Xia and Chen Guang to watch in the grand

finals."

"Xiaodong is pretty good too."

"Yeah, the three of them all have a chance of getting crowned champion."

"It's time for the revival round, and there's only one spot in the grand finals up for grabs. Let's see who can get it."

"He Huan and Xue Kaiqi have the best hopes."

"I'm more optimistic of Zhao Wuliu's chances."

"In any case, we can just ignore Zhang Ye as the grand champion."

"Yeah, Zhang Ye is no longer good."

"That might not necessarily be true. We'll still have to see who Zhang Ye invites for the grand finals."

"That's right! I think they're still using the two-round format. The first round will have a celebrity guest partner like before. If Zhang Ye manages to invite Zhang Yuanqi again, that would be quite something."

"Yeah, true."

"Let's see who he'll invite then."

"I don't see it that way. With Zhang Ye's current form and the songs that he's written, whoever he invites won't matter. If I have to put it bluntly, of the singers who have qualified for the grand finals, Zhang Ye is the only one unworthy of his place. He only managed to get in on luck. I won't mention Zhang Xia and Chen Guang, or Xiaodong and Amy, but even the eliminated singers are much stronger than Zhang Ye. We can clearly see that he's lost his touch and can't come up with any more good songs with substance. All he knows is to produce these catchy tunes that we've heard. But are such songs suitable for competition? They won't be able to get him a ranking at all. Zhang Ye has performed a song with no lyrics

before. It was 'Opera' that he sang on King of Masked Singers that I found so amazing when I heard it. But look at 'Perturbed.' It's also a song without lyrics but the taste has changed. This shows that Zhang Ye is really out of ideas."

"Hai, this is the downfall of a singing champion."

"It's quite a pity."

"What has happened to Zhang Ye?"

"Who knows!"

"He suddenly became like this, so it's quite regrettable."

"That's right. I used to anticipate his songs, but who could've expected that he can't write good songs anymore. Those garbage songs that he's been singing recently shows that he's of a different class from the other singers. Just listen to Grandma Zhang and Old Chen's singing, they're totally on a different level from him. That's what you call real singing and real singers. That's what true art is about. Otherwise, what's the difference between the songs Zhang Ye sings and the songs that normal people sing at the karaoke?"

"I'm a fan turned passerby."

"Hai, the higher the expectations, the greater the disappointment."

"The main thing is that the opponents are too strong. Even if Zhang Ye can still write a good song, he can't beat Zhang Xia and Chen Guang."

"Agreed."

By this point in the broadcast of I Am a Singer, everyone had lost confidence in Zhang Ye. Many of the music industry's insiders came forward to give their evaluations as well. They felt Zhang Ye had entered a bottleneck and was losing his touch. It seemed like he could only go back to his old job from now on since he couldn't write any more good songs. It got so bad that even Zhang Xia, Chen

Guang, Xiaodong, and the others were feeling the same way. A singer like Zhang Ye who had amazed countless people had faded to nothing overnight. He could no longer find that feeling that inspired his singing and songwriting. It was such a shame!

Criticism!

Doubt!

Derision!

Such voices were constantly keeping Zhang Ye company.

Even his studio's staff were panicking.

Ha Qiqi said anxiously, "Director Zhang, your reputation these days has been tumbling."

"Why don't we buy a song or two?" Zhang Zuo suggested. "We might be able to turn it around in the grand finals that way. We can't keep going on like this."

Buy songs?

Zhang Ye said, "I've already written the songs."

Zhang Zuo sighed. "But the songs that you have been writing recently..." He was too scared to continue.

Everyone in the studio was frowning and sulking. Zhang Ye was getting more and more popular by the day, which was a good thing. But similarly, his reputation was just as important. Now that everyone was saying Zhang Ye couldn't sing anymore, they were getting very anxious. However, it seemed like Zhang Ye did not take it to heart and did not say anything about it no matter how much they asked. Actually, they understood Director Zhang quite well since they had known him for many years. On the surface, it might look like Zhang Ye was unaffected. He was always laughing, yet each time they could feel that Zhang Ye wasn't as happy as he looked after a performance.

Ring, ring, ring.

Hu Fei's call came in.

Zhang Ye answered: "Brother Hu, what's the matter?"

Hu Fei laughed loudly. "The viewership rating has hit a new high! It has set a new record again! It's fantastic!"

"That's good then," Zhang Ye said cheerfully.

"The grand finals will be coming up soon, great work."

"It was nothing."

"For the celebrity guest partner segment, are you sure about inviting that person?"

"Yup."

"But isn't that a little too...you know?"

"Hur hur, nobody'll be able to guess who it is. But I'm sure the viewers will enjoy it."

Hu Fei said: "Well, alright then. We'll do it however you say. But your results might..."

Zhang Ye said: "I know."

After hanging up, Zhang Ye did not say another word. He quietly headed back into his office and sat there having a smoke, staring blankly at the empty wall. No one knew what Zhang Ye was thinking right now, nor did anyone know how he was feeling.

The task was completed.

This was good enough, right?

This...was all he had to do, right?

But for some reason, after Zhang Ye put out his cigarette, he clenched his fists so hard that his fingernails dug into his palms, leaving several deep, red marks!

Chapter 1264: Anyone can win, except me!

On the day of the grand finals.

A tense atmosphere had built up!

The phenomenal variety show I Am a Singer was no longer watched just by those who liked it. It had long become the subject of heated discussions by people all over the nation!

In the streets.

In the neighborhoods.

In the offices.

In the schools.

Everyone was talking about who would end up as the grand champion!

Those who were initially scheduled for overtime at work even asked for time off in advance to go home to catch the live broadcast.

"Brothers, remember to cast your votes for Grandma Zhang!"

"Right, it hasn't been easy for an old comrade like her!"

"Where are Grandma Zhang's fans at?"

"Where are Chen Guang's fans at? Form up!"

"Who has tickets to tonight's live broadcast venue? I'll buy them for 2,000 RMB each!"

"The LED boards for Sister Dong are ready. Everyone, take a look and see if they're OK."

"Everyone, please get others to vote for Amy. Please support her!"

"Vote for He Huan! It wasn't easy for him having to come through by the revival round!"

"Tonight's voting will be done through our cell phones. The

grand finals are really too close to call. But it's very important, so can everyone please give your votes to Teacher Huang Cheng? I'd appreciate it if you can."

The fan groups of the singers were already teaming up to campaign for votes. The early statistics of the online poll's support were also published. The usual suspects of Chen Guang and Zhang Xia were still the favorites to win the championship. Both their support numbers kept increasing as it became a two-horse race where their stats constantly overtook each other's. Sometimes, Old Chen was in the lead. But at other times, Grandma Zhang was in first place. Coming in behind them were He Huan, Xiaodong, Huang Cheng, Amy, and Zhang Ye, respectively. He Huan, the Prince of Love Songs, had performed exceedingly well during the revival round to take his place in the grand finals today. His support numbers were also extremely high as he surpassed Xiaodong in the poll. Although this poll was only a Weibo statistic, it clearly showed the problem. For the singers the viewers were optimistic about, their rankings were generally not too bad.

Only Zhang's fan club kept on the down low throughout. There was almost no one helping Zhang Ye get votes. This was the most direct cause of Zhang Ye's low rankings on the stage of I Am a Singer.

...

Zhang Ye's parents' house.

After lunch.

His mother asked, "Son, when are you setting off for the TV station?"

"I'm just about to leave." Zhang Ye checked his watch. "Everyone's waiting for me."

His mother complained, "Why are they hurrying you. The live broadcast is at night, so why can't they let you rest a bit more?"

"That I can stay home for lunch today is already a break for me," Zhang Ye said with a smile.

His father said, "There's quite a lot of prep work to handle before a live broadcast. Our son is the executive director, so of course he has to go earlier. A heap of people are waiting for his instructions."

His mother harrumphed and said, "In the future, stop taking roles like the executive director. It's bad enough that you're working so hard, but look at how many people are scolding you online."

Zhang Ye nodded. "Alright."

Wu Zeqing was on her day off today and had come over as well.

Wu Zeqing said, "Go over there, I'll help you with your makeup."

Zhang Ye exclaimed, "Aiya, there are professional makeup artists at the station."

"I'd be worried if they put your makeup on." Wu Zeqing insisted on doing it for him.

Zhang Ye could only say, "Well, alright."

They went into his room.

Old Wu immediately started to meticulously apply his makeup.

His eyebrows.

His nose.

His lips.

Zhang Ye suddenly looked at her in the mirror and said, "Old Wu, I might not be able to get a good place for this round, so don't bother watching tonight."

Wu Zeqing said, "I'll definitely watch."

Zhang Ye said firmly, "I only want you to see me when I'm winning."

Wu Zeqing laughed. "I'll still watch it."

Zhang Ye said, "But..."

Wu Zeqing combed his hair for him. "I understand."

"I—" Zhang Ye hesitated a little before going on, "I can't allow myself to sing well."

Wu Zeqing nodded, then said with a smile, "I knew that you'd already made your decision when you went up onstage for the first time. You were only doing it to save the show, to accompany them on this journey. But none of them could see that you'd never planned on winning in the first place. The show was made by you, the rules were set by you, you're the host, the vote counter, and everything related to the show is overseen by you, including the compilation of the voting numbers. Everyone in the program team are your subordinates, so anyone can win, except you. Only you are not allowed to win. They're all so stupid to not see that. This decision must not have been easy for you. The others might not know, but how could I not know? You're someone who never likes to admit defeat. The stage is your life, so if you're standing on it, you must want to win. No one knows how much you've sacrificed until now. No one knows how much you've endured. But I know, I understand, and I will support your decision."

In the end, only Old Wu knew him!

In the end, only Old Wu understood!

Yes. Anyone could win, except Zhang Ye!

Zhang Ye sighed. "I was just afraid that you'd be disappointed."

Wu Zeqing smiled. "I'm not disappointed. I know what kind of person you are. My fiancé is a valiant man who no one can compare to." With a pause, she started filling in Zhang Ye's eyebrows and said, "Therefore, even if you came in last place, I would still watch the live episode tonight."

...

Later that afternoon.

It was getting busy at Beijing Television.

Everyone was putting in their best effort for the live episode that was going to happen in a few hours. As they worked, some of the staff were also excitedly discussing tonight's grand finals.

"I like Zhang Xia."

"Old Chen is quite good too."

"Yup, the grand champion has to be one of them."

"But I still prefer Director Zhang."

"Director Zhang is out of the running."

"The Director Zhang of the past was really awesome, but..."

"Has Director Zhang really lost his touch?"

"Everyone's saying that he's dropped to a level comparable to that of a karaoke singer. But as for why? Who knows? Talent has never been easy to assess since it's intangible. When you have it, you can even control the weather. But without it, you can't even write a good song. But what can you do about that? Haven't there been a lot of famous songwriters who have completely disappeared from the scene? They couldn't keep up with the times, so they got filtered out."

"Hai."

"Hey, Director Zhang is here!"

The few of them immediately shut their mouths.

Zhang Ye came over. His ears were sharp, so he actually picked up on a bit of their conversation. However, he did not say anything.

Hu Fei soon came looking for him. "Where's Director Zhang? Has he arrived yet?"

Zhang Ye looked at him. "What's the matter?"

"We have to add another host. Shanshan can't handle it alone," Hu Fei said with a frown.

But Zhang Ye said, "She'll be fine."

Hu Fei immediately said, "I wouldn't be worried at all if you were the one hosting. I wouldn't raise an objection at all. Even if you dismantled the entire stage, I wouldn't be worried that things would go wrong. You've seen all kinds of major events and your adaptability is great. Besides, you've also done many live broadcasts. However, Shanshan hasn't. For a huge stage that's broadcasting live to the entire country, all of the hosting, stage control, and atmosphere has to be handled by Shanshan alone? I'm not saying that she doesn't have the ability. Shanshan was also brought up by me, so of course I want the best for her. But this jump is too big and too risky for her. It's fine if you can't host the grand finals since you have to sing. But why can't we arrange for another one or two hosts to support her?"

Zhang Ye asked, "Did Shanshan request this herself?"

"I'm just worried," Hu Fei said.

Zhang Ye waved it off. "Then there's nothing to talk about. We won't be discussing this anymore."

Hu Fei said in a speechless manner, "Little Zhang!"

"If she could host King of Masked Singers, why couldn't she handle this?"

"The hosting lines for King of Masked Singers were only announcements, and there was only a page of it. But it's different today with there being more than 10 pages of hosting lines and a need for spontaneous additions during the entire broadcast!"

Seeing the two heads of the program team arguing, the people around them were all too scared to speak out.

Finally, Dong Shanshan came over when she found out. "Zhang'er, why don't you assign me another—"

Before she could finish speaking, Zhang Ye said decisively, "Stop bringing up things that have already been decided. We're going ahead with what we planned. Teacher Shanshan will go onstage alone. If anything goes wrong, I'll be responsible for it!"

Hou Ge said anxiously, "But a station head said this morning..."

Zhang Ye pointed at himself. "Which station head? Get him to come look for me!"

Hou Ge coughed.

There was nothing that Hu Fei could do about it either.

Xiao Lu blinked and said, "I also think that Teacher Shanshan alone is enough to get the job done."

In fact, Zhang Ye and Hu Fei often had differences in opinion over work matters, but it did not affect their personal relationship. After the issue passed, they would be back on friendly terms. Any disagreements were just over work. Zhang Ye had not considered any other person for the role of the host. When Dong Shanshan lowered her status to take the host-manager role, Zhang Ye said that he would leave the best position for her. And it was precisely this hosting role for the live broadcast of the grand finals that was the best position. He knew that many of the Beijing Television hosts were eyeing this role as anyone could understand that whoever managed to take it would surely become the big brother or sister of Beijing TV. That would definitely cement their future status in the industry. As such, who wouldn't be tempted? So when they heard that Zhang Ye would not be hosting the grand finals, a lot of people started having thoughts about it. But unfortunately for them, they could not get past him!

Other than Dong Shanshan, no one would be allowed to do it!

Zhang Ye was sometimes just this unreasonable!

Chapter 1265: Zhang Ye's shocking celebrity guest partner!

On the same night.

Counting down to the live broadcast.

"Three!"

"Two!"

"One!"

The live broadcast of I Am a Singer's grand finals officially kicked off!

...

Back at home.

His mother was holding a packet of melon seeds and pointing at the television. "Little Wu, it's about to begin!"

"Coming, Auntie." Wu Zeqing walked over gracefully and sat down.

His father asked, "When does Little Ye come on?"

His mother, who was munching on the melon seeds, said, "I don't know."

...

At the studio.

Everyone was putting in overtime today and stayed behind to watch the live broadcast.

Ha Qiqi gasped and said, "It's starting!"

Little Wang said excitedly, "Just who could Director Zhang have invited?"

Zhang Zuo said, "I'm not sure, he said it was a secret."

Tong Fu laughed and said, "He didn't even tell us about it. Could there be a surprise?"

Little Wang said, "I still believe that Director Zhang will emerge as the champion!"

When the others heard that, they could only respond with a bitter laugh.

Emerge as the champion?

Was that even possible?

...

At Peking University.

In the student dormitories.

"The live broadcast is starting!"

"Sisters, come over quickly!"

"Aiya, I don't feel like watching it anymore."

"Why not?"

"I'm a diehard fan of Zhang Ye. If he can't write any good songs and his singing has declined, what's there left for me to watch? It will only make me feel worse!"

"Maybe Professor Zhang will be able to turn things around?"

"Yeah, let's just watch."

"Alright."

...

At this moment.

Viewers around the country were all waiting before their televisions.

Dong Shanshan appeared in a stunning red dress and amazed countless people. The opening advertising messages were presented and an introduction of the grand finals' rules was

announced. She also did so with humor within her professionalism, making many people laugh to tears. It was only now that a lot of them realized that this sexy goddess they thought only relied on her looks and figure was actually able to front a show by herself. Ignoring her looks and figure, she was still an excellent host!

On Weibo.

"Shanshan's popularity is going to soar!"

"She's always gonna be my goddess!"

"I really like her!"

"She doesn't have any scandals and even keeps a low profile!"

"Right. Maintaining such a good reputation despite going the sexy route, there's really no one who could do it except her!"

"Teacher Shanshan is doing better and better these days."

"That's because she has the support of Zhang Ye."

"That's right. As long as Zhang Ye makes a show, the host will be Dong Shanshan. No one stands a chance against her. Their relationship as classmates goes way back."

"Zhang Ye is indeed a loyal friend."

"Yeah, Shanshan and Zhang Ye's fan clubs have almost become a family."

After that, the buildup performances began. The eliminated singers from before all returned to sing for the show.

Zhao Wuliu...

Xue Kaiqi...

Li Naran...

Good songs kept coming one after another.

The television viewers and live studio audience were all

mesmerized from listening.

"They're all such great singers!"

"I feel that every one of them could have made it into the grand finals!"

"Yeah, they sang amazingly."

"At the very least, they're still better than Zhang Ye."

"Heh, don't mention that fellow anymore. We still don't know which celebrity guest partner he invited for today."

"That's right. All the other singer's guest partners have already been exposed. Even though it might not be true, there's still a general idea of who's coming. It's only Zhang Ye's guest who hasn't been revealed!"

"We'll find out very soon."

"He better not pull some stunt again!"

"Pfft, yeah, he's always full of surprises!"

The buildup performances ended.

The competition proper finally began!

When Dong Shanshan reappeared onstage, everyone's hearts jumped into their throats as they stared hard and pricked up their ears, as though afraid of missing a scene or a note.

In the studio.

On the stage.

Dong Shanshan smiled and said, "Next up, we're going to officially begin the competition. The order of appearance for the grand finals will still be decided by picking lots. However, our first singer today did not partake in the lot picking and requested to be the first one to come onstage to perform. After seeking the consent of the other singers, our program team chose to respect this decision." With a pause, she added on, "But of course, we didn't

dare to not respect this decision either since it is our executive director we're talking about."

The entire studio audience laughed.

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye will be singing first?"

"Who's his guest partner?"

"There's a fool who would request to go first?"

"The first one to sing will be very disadvantaged!"

Everyone started whispering.

Dong Shanshan said, "So, let's welcome the first singer and his celebrity guest partner on. We'll hand the stage over to them."

She left the stage.

The spotlights immediately shone on the moon gate.

The live studio audience turned and stared in that direction!

No one blinked at their televisions!

Even the singers backstage were waiting anxiously to see who Zhang Ye had invited!

With the lights on them, two figures slowly walked out. One of them was smiling and the other was waving to the audience. When they saw who it was beside Zhang Ye, each and every person was flabbergasted. At this moment, it was as though 10,000 grass mud horses were rampaging through their mind's eye without taking a single wisp of a cloud away!

People screaming!

People passing out!

People staring!

There was disbelief!

It blew up in the studio and in front of the televisions!

"Ah!"

"Why is it him?"

"What the heck!"

"Zhang Ye! You really don't have a shred of decency in you!"

"I really burst out laughing! Hahahaha!"

"Th-This is way too goddamn unexpected!"

"My mom just asked why I was kneeling watching TV!"

"Zhang Ye, I really have to give it to you!"

"Th-This is something that only you can fucking think of!"

His mother was stunned.

His father was dumbfounded.

Wu Zeqing quirked a corner of her lip up.

Ha Qiqi nearly fell out of her seat!

Zhang Zuo stared with wide eyes.

Xiaodong burst into laughter!

Amy was at a loss for words!

Zhang Xia: "..."

Chen Guang: "..."

No one had expected it to be him!

everyone has speculated and come up with many possible candidates as to who might be Zhang Ye's celebrity guest partner. If Zhang Ye wanted to turn things around, then the first round of the grand finals was incredibly important. At a time Zhang Ye couldn't produce any more good songs, finding a powerhouse singer was the best way for him to get more votes. But to everyone's surprise, Zhang Ye actually found someone no one could have ever thought of. Yes, it was someone who didn't even cross their minds!

It was Yao Jiancai!

Zhang Ye's best partner!

"I'm gonna cry!"

"Old Yao, don't fool around! Hurry back home!"

"Old Yao, did you come to the wrong studio?"

"This is I Am a Singer, not some crosstalk contest!"

"I'm gonna faint too!"

"What's the meaning of this? Are you two going to put together a crosstalk? Pfft!"

"I'm cramping up with laughter! Zhang Ye is too good at starting things!"

"If Old Yao can really sing, I'll fucking streak in public! I'll do it right now!"

"I'll go as well!"

"I would really like to see how these two fellas are going to sing!"

"Damn, they've brought out a crosstalk table!"

"Are they really going to fucking perform a crosstalk?"

"This is a singing competition, why would they perform a crosstalk?"

"If these two can really do a crosstalk with music, I'll call them both daddy!"

"I'll call them mummy!"

"Come on, how the hell can there be a musical crosstalk!"

A group of professional music critics and fellow peers sitting in the front row were also stunned when they saw Zhang Ye picking up a " gavel " block.

The table had been carried out onto the stage.

Both Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai were dressed in their crosstalk costumes.

Suddenly, with a bang, the gavel block was slammed onto the table!

Zhang Ye opened his mouth and recited.

"Speaking and acting out the right way to live life.

"Walking the straightest of three tracks.

"What goes around comes around.

"Change is the only constant."

After the introduction poem was said, the sound of a gong cut in and the musical instruments started playing!

Zhang Ye sang.

"I was born to an impoverished family, "with six maids and a dozen or so security guards.

"But to be straightforward, and to embody righteousness, "I beat up Southern Mountain Nursing Home, "trample on North Head Preschool,

"I make anyone over 90 and under 9 cower in fear!"

Zhang Xia laughed. "Pfft!"

Xiaodong burst into laughter on the spot!

Born to an impoverished family?

Is this what you call being born to an impoverished family!

Over 90 and under 9?

Aiyo, why don't you just die or something!

Amy was stunned. "Rap? Is this rap?"

Some of those in the audience were laughing while others were taken aback. Fuck, he could really sing it!

The audience was shocked watching!

Zhang Ye calmly sang at a fast pace.

"He says the Analects have recorded "the world was evil. Can't deal, leave.

"You can't have your cake and eat it too.

"You don't have a house or a car, but you're not mean.

"Worship me so that whoever tries to bully you, will be slashed by me three times!"

Yao Jiancai latched onto that. "How?"

Zhang Ye said, "By slashing his car tires, geddit!"

The audience was in stitches!

"Hahahaha!"

"Aiyo!"

"These two are so terrible!"

"These lyrics are so damn funny!"

By now, the song was finally coming to the end.

The audience was also getting more and more intrigued as they listened!

Zhang Ye sang, "But right then, a fearsome being stood next to me, staring, putting his hand in his bag like a mugger." He looked at Yao Jiancai.

Yao Jiancai already had his hand in the bag with a fierce look on his face.

Zhang Ye continued singing, "How could Lord Zhang take this lying down? With dignity at stake, he swaggered over cool as could be and said—" Then his voice faded. "Bro, is there something you want?"

The audience cramped up with laughter again!

Do you call this cool?

Do you call this swagger?

Yao Jiancai sneered, pointing with his chin, "Do you know who was responsible for last year's mutilated corpse in the moat?"

Zhang Ye said, "Huh?"

Yao Jiancai snarled, "Do you know who was responsible for beating someone up last month until they became a retard?"

"Huh?"

Yao Jiancai pointed at his feet. "Then surely you know who was responsible for that fatal stabbing right here two days ago?"

Zhang Ye said in fright, "Huh? I don't know, what do you want?"

The audience was also listening attentively!

What did he want?

Were they going to start fighting?

Did he bump into some vicious guy?

Yao Jiancai stared hard as he said, "You really don't know?"

Zhang Ye said, "I real-l-l-l-ly don't know!"

All of a sudden, Yao Jiancai took a newspaper out of his bag as he switched to a sharp, high-pitched voice and said with a grin, "Hey, then why don't you buy a copy of Legal Daily?"

Everyone in the studio saw red!

Legal Daily?

So you're just a fucking newspaper hawker?!

The song ended!

Applause rang out instantly!

At the same time, the sound of laughter went on for a very long while. Even Dong Shanshan looked like she was tearing up from

laughter offstage. It was also her first time hearing this!

Excitement was running high online too!

"I passed out laughing!"

"That was so much fun!"

"Musical crosstalk? They really could do it?"

"I'm convinced!"

"I was on my knees early on in the song!"

"Who was the one who said that they'll call them daddy and mummy? Who mentioned that they'd go streaking? Get out there! They've really used rap music to perform a crosstalk!"

"Even this is possible?!"

" Nonsense Has Its Nonsense Logic "!

A musical crosstalk song from Zhang Ye's former world!

The people of this world had obviously not heard something like this before, nor had anything like it ever appeared!

Even the music critics and professionals in the music industry who were sitting in the front row had been stunned and overwhelmed by Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai's musical crosstalk!

Chapter 1266: Zhang Ye switches songs!

Back at home.

His mother couldn't stop laughing. "That rascal!"

His father was also pretty amused by the performance. "This song is not bad."

"He's really enjoying his singing," his mother said while munching on melon seeds.

However, when Wu Zeqing, who was sitting next to them, saw the seemingly happy Zhang Ye smiling on screen, she said with heartache, "He's actually not enjoying himself."

His mother was taken aback and turned to look at her. "Why?"

Wu Zeqing said, "Because this isn't a song he wants to sing."

...

In the studio.

"He's created a new genre!"

"That's pretty impressive of him then."

"But there's no chance of winning with this song."

"Yeah, he won't be able to get into the top three like this. Zhang Ye isn't fated to be the grand champion."

"Grand champion? I doubt he'll even break into the top five! But I do kinda like this song, it's pretty relaxing and funny. If it wasn't a competition today, I would've found it rather interesting to listen to."

"That's right, but aren't his other songs on this stage all like that too?"

"With the best matched duo of the crosstalk world singing together, I wonder if the viewership ratings will shoot through the roof again? Haha! He's really full of surprises! A song like that will

surely become very popular in the karaokes. And then there's also 'The Hottest Ethnic Trend' and 'Small Apple.' Those are definitely songs that will get played a lot in the karaoke sessions of ordinary people."

"Pfft, did you guys see what they're calling Zhang Ye now?"

"I saw it, they're all saying that he's the King of Karaoke. Haha!"

"Karaoke won't be a problem for him for sure. He can certainly bring up the atmosphere during a session. But for a stage like this, it's still a place to compete on artistic value and singing abilities."

Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai left the stage.

Quite a few audience members came rushing forward.

"Teacher Zhang!"

"I like you so much!"

"You're really funny!"

"Can I get a hug, Teacher Zhang?"

"Your song was so funny! But I still won't be voting for you."

"When it comes to singing, I still find that the other singers are doing better. However, I like your songs."

Zhang Ye gave them a hug one by one. "Thank you, thank you."

When Yao Jiancai heard that, he tried to pull in some votes for Zhang Ye. Their microphones were still on at the moment, but when Yao Jiancai was beginning to say, "Please vote for—"

Zhang Ye nudged him.

Yao Jiancai was startled and shut his mouth.

Zhang Ye didn't say anything and left with Old Yao from the wings.

There was no need to canvass for votes.

This was good enough.

This was all he needed.

Backstage.

In the singers' waiting rooms.

Zhang Xia specially came out to welcome them. "Old Yao, you're crossing over into our music industry too?"

Yao Jiancai laughed and said, "Me? How could I possibly join the music industry? I even had to force myself to come here today. I was so surprised when Zhang Ye called and asked me to be his celebrity guest partner. I said that I wouldn't go but he threatened to tear down my house. So I just thought that it'd be better to come since I just had my house renovated last year."

Zhang Xia said, "It was a very good song. I suppose only the two of you could sing something like that."

Yao Jiancai sighed. "I only came to support this kid."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Grandma Zhang, are you the third person to sing?"

"Yes, I picked the number three lot earlier." Zhang Xia had been through many big occasions before and was one of the singers here with strong mental fortitude. "Xiaodong is going second. I think she should've already gone up onstage?"

Zhang Ye said, "Alright then, I'll head back into my room to listen to her performance. I'll be cheering you on too. I'm optimistic about both you and Old Chen's chances to be crowned as the grand champion."

Zhang Xia smiled. "Sure, I'll do my best."

Yao Jiancai headed back to the celebrity guest partners' waiting room.

Meanwhile, Zhang Ye went into Room #1, which was his designated waiting room. On the television, Xiaodong had already started singing. Her celebrity guest partner was Li Xiaoxian, the

other member of Spring Garden. The moment they started singing, the audience became very excited and seemingly forgot all about Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai's musical crosstalk. Xiaodong and Li Xiaoxian were singing a love song that depicted the story of two women fighting over a man!

"Please leave him."

"No, you should leave."

"Don't hurt him anymore."

"It was you who hurt him."

Their singing was outstanding!

The song was very touching too!

The cameras panned to the audience and showed their amazed expressions.

Zhang Ye also found the performance to be quite good. However, he started clenching his fists tightly again for some reason.

Xiaodong finished singing.

Zhang Xia took to the stage.

Followed by Huang Cheng.

Followed by Chen Guang.

Then Amy.

And finally, He Huan.

Everyone gave their best and did great!

Their performances were either moving, touching, explosive, or sorrowful. It really felt like a feast of delicacies as the grand musical event touched countless of people!

On the Internet, an endless debate was going on.

"Zhang Xia must be the grand champion!"

"Get lost, victory to Chen Guang!"

"I have a good feeling about Xiaodong!"

"Amy might just cause an upset."

"Huang Cheng's song selection wasn't that good."

"Well, anyone could become the champion but Zhang Ye, haha."

"Of course! Did you even have to say that? The songs he sang were utter garbage!"

"Yeah, they were really crap! They're all just catchy tunes!"

"Zhang Ye has lost his touch."

"After listening to everyone else perform and thinking back to Zhang Ye's song, they're indeed on a different level to his performance. He really can't write those touching songs he wrote in the past!"

"It's the decline of a hero."

"That 'Nonsense Has Its Nonsense Logic' of his left me so sleepy."

"What the hell happened to Zhang Ye?"

"Who knows! He lost his talent overnight. He's even so stubborn that he doesn't want to sing the songs that he's sung before, nor cover another singer's songs, so who can be blamed for that?"

The first round of performances ended.

Everyone was waiting for the results of the first round now. The singer in last place for the first round rankings would have to perform first in the second round, and so on and so forth. Every singer was waiting in their individual rooms and hoping they would not have to perform so early in the second round, because that would mean that their number of votes was not ideal.

Only Zhang Ye was not waiting for the results. Instead, he was browsing through his cell phone to see the reviews from the people.

Crap?

Lost his touch?

On the decline?

He showed no expression but felt a heavy weight in his heart. He couldn't get rid of this feeling and it felt unbearable.

Suddenly, the door was pushed open.

Dafei and Xiao Lu both came running in. "Director Zhang!"

Zhang Ye looked at them both. "What is it?"

Xiao Lu said pleasantly surprised, "We went past it! We went past it!"

Dafei also sounded extremely excited. "The viewership ratings have surpassed 4%! It just managed to pass that mark by a little! We've broken the record for the viewership ratings of variety shows! That ceiling of the variety world!"

Zhang Ye laughed. "Good, very good!"

All of a sudden, Dong Shanshan, who was in the studio, announced the rankings. She said, "The results are now in my hands. Regrettably, the first round's lowest ranked singer is—Zhang Ye. So then, could Teacher Zhang please get ready while we get ready to begin the second round of performances?"

The voice sounded from the television in the room loud and clear.

Dafei was stunned.

Xiao Lu did not say anything either.

Zhang Ye just smiled and said, "Alright, it's my turn soon. Both of you hurry up and get back to work."

Xiao Lu said, "Director Zhang!"

"Go on." Zhang Ye waved her away.

Dafei and Xiao Lu gave each other a look and walked away silently.

With only five minutes left to prepare, Zhang Ye sat in his waiting room for a bit before slowly getting up. He straightened his shirt and arranged his hair a little before lightly stepping out of the room.

Along the way, the staff all turned to look at Zhang Ye, not knowing what to say.

Director Zhang was in last place!

Many of the staff members didn't know how to feel about it!

"Director Zhang..."

"Director Zhang..."

"Director..."

Zhang Ye smiled and nodded at everyone.

The viewership ratings had broken 4%! I Am a Singer had created history! His mission was finally complete, and it was done so beautifully too. It was carried out perfectly without anything to nitpick!

I've done all that I was supposed to do!

Then for the last song, can I be a little headstrong?

I don't want any votes!

I really don't!

I just want to sing!

I just want to seriously sing something that I wish to sing!

Can I?

In the opposite direction, Hu Fei was walking over cheerfully. "It's time to go onstage, Director Zhang."

Zhang Ye stopped in his tracks and said, "Is there still time if I want to change my song?"

Hu Fei said, stunned, "Change songs?"

Zhang Ye shook his head. "No, it's nothing, I was just saying."

But Hu Fei pulled him back and said sternly, "Just what's going on?"

Zhang Ye laughed at himself. "Just pretend you didn't hear me."

The nearby staff and camera operators who heard him were also taken aback!

There are only two more minutes until the performance starts, and this is even a live broadcast, yet you're asking to change songs now? How would that be possible! How could there still be time! No one could agree to it!

No one understood what was with Zhang Ye!

Moreso, no one could understand what Zhang Ye was thinking!

Hu Fei fell silent. He did not say anything in response.

Zhang Ye continued making his way to the front.

One step.

Two steps.

Three steps.

Before him, the stage was getting closer and closer.

Suddenly, Hu Fei called out to him from behind, "Zhang'er!"

Zhang Ye looked back.

Hu Fei looked him in the eye. "...Just sing what you want to sing! Leave the rest to me!"

The people around them were frightened!

"Producer Hu!"

"Have you gone mad!"

"Fuck!"

"This—! This—!"

Zhang Ye looked at Old Hu. "Are you sure?"

Hu Fei laughed. "You're the executive director, and I'm the executive producer. Our words are law, so who would dare disobey?" He then turned to an employee nearby. "Inform Shanshan! Get her to stall for another five minutes no matter what!"

The employee was almost in tears. "Producer Hu...this—!"

Hu Fei said loudly, "Hurry up!"

The employee wiped his sweat away. "Understood!"

Chapter 1267: 'The King of Karaoke'!

Watching television.

Many viewers were wondering what was going on.

"Eh? What's with this?"

"Why is Dong Shanshan still talking?"

"Won't Teacher Zhang hurry onstage already? I'm really looking forward to seeing another funny performance by him."

"Hahaha, it better not be another plaza dance tune. If it is, I'll really have to kneel!"

His mother said, "Where is he?"

His father said, "Probably getting ready."

Wu Zeqing just quietly watched the TV.

The singers backstage were finding it rather strange too.

Zhang Xia wondered, "Why hasn't he gone onto the stage yet?"

Amy laughed to her host-manager and said, "What kind of big move is Teacher Zhang pulling?"

Xiaodong guessed, "It was a musical crosstalk for the first round, could he be doing a musical talk show for the second round?"

Xiaodong's host-manager couldn't stop laughing at that. "With Director Zhang's personality, it might really be possible!"

Countless people were waiting.

Zhang Yuanqi and Fang Weihong were watching the competition.

Fan Wenli was watching.

Ning Lan was watching.

A Heavenly King was watching.

The students and teachers of Peking University were watching.

The students and teachers of Media College were watching.

Suddenly, Dong Shanshan said, "Alright, let's hand the stage over to our first singer."

Finally, Zhang Ye appeared. The entire nation's viewers' attention was on him. They were either in stitches, yawning in boredom, or railing at him. Voices like these were also present on a smaller scale within the live studio audience of I Am a Singer's grand finals.

The stage was located not far from the live studio audience, so anyone talking in there could be heard quite clearly.

"Let's see what kind of nonsense he's gonna come up with this time, haha!"

"I like Zhang Ye, he gave me a hug after his first performance."

"So why didn't you vote for him since he hugged you? I saw you voting for Zhang Xia instead."

"Uhh, don't you tell me off. Teacher Zhang gave you a hug too, but didn't you vote for Chen Guang?"

"That's because Chen Guang has true skill. Teacher Zhang only knows how to sing casually now, and those songs aren't even touching anymore."

"Go karaoke king!"

"King of Karaoke!"

"King of Karaoke!"

Quite a few audience members were heckling him.

Even the TV viewers were finding this rather amusing when they heard the noise!

King of Karaoke?

What an appropriate title!

Karaoke standard songs!

And a karaoke level of singing!

A piano was placed on the stage. Usually, when a piano was put on stage, it would be placed at an angle. But this one wasn't. It faced the audience.

Zhang Ye sat in front of it and stretched out his hands, suddenly trembling a little.

Was it excitement?

Was it nervousness?

Was it sadness?

Looking at the stage lights, looking at the densely packed audience, Zhang Ye had the urge to cry for the first time. His heart was pounding like mad, so he took a deep breath but couldn't slow it down no matter what.

Did you guys know? Be it "Perturbed," "Small Apple," or even "Nonsense Has Its Nonsense Logic," none of those songs were what I wanted to sing. But I still sang each song very seriously; none of them were perfunctory performances. I practiced them time and again, I rearranged the music over and over, I used all the spare time that I had to polish those songs. I just wanted to sing them to the best I could, because I thought that since I couldn't win, then I should at least bring some smiles and laughter to all of you.

Did you guys know that?

Did you really know that?

His hands landed and the sound of the piano cut through the air.

A sad melody hit everyone right in the heart. The contrast was too great. It was so great that everyone was caught off guard. The audience was dumbfounded for a moment, clearly because this was not the viral tune they were expecting. Could there be a surprise coming up? Would Zhang Ye suddenly jump onto the piano and

dance?

The atmosphere turned quiet!

The sound of the piano seemingly transported them to another world.

There was only a person with a piano in this world.

Zhang Ye lightly closed his eyes and sang.

"My singing isn't touching enough, but please don't frown.

"I want to be with you til death do us part.

"I just want to have fun and sing til the next century's countdown.

"So please don't mind me playing to the emotions of your heart."

The audience was stunned!

Everyone was stunned!

This!

This song!

Zhang Ye opened his eyes.

"What else can I do?

"If cuddling cannot excite you?

"Cheaply singing,

"the emotions written in love songs.

"What else can I do?

"If love no longer inspires?

"Those clichéd lyrics spur your compassion."

The two girls Zhang Ye hugged earlier had their eyes turn red and teary!

Hu Fei was stunned!

Dafei exclaimed!

Xiao Lu covered her mouth in disbelief!

Why?

Why was it like this?

Zhang Ye's voice was getting louder.

"Who still believes in shallow words like 'for all of our days'?"

"Come, I will gift you a song that made millions of people cry!

"A never before heard vow is like a happy Ferris wheel.

"Only that can make me scream how deeply I love, love, love, love you."

All of a sudden, he stopped playing the piano and singing!

Countless people looked at Zhang Ye's face and saw that his eyes had reddened while his hands were shaking!

One second!

Two seconds!

Three seconds!

I only know how to sing casually?

I was singing garbage?

Zhang Ye pressed the keys.

"Throwing my heart and soul into the Milky Way.

"Who is garbage?

"If you don't want me to be sad, please spare me a bit of your love."

Backstage, Zhang Xia stood up!

Chen Guang was amazed!

Xiaodong was dumbfounded!

Huang Cheng was stunned!

Amy's tears started falling!

Lost his touch?

Couldn't write a good song?

His singing was declining?

Garbage?

Bullshit!

Bull fucking shit!

Clearly, you can still sing great!

Clearly, you can still write great songs!

Clearly, you could have beat everyone else!

So why?

Just why?!

Zhang Ye sang sadly.

"I cry whenever I sing what's on my mind.

"If you're afraid of getting sad, just take my hand.

"I have thousands of things to tell you, combined.

"It's simpler than wishing to be together forever, it's no rare demand.

"Who still believes in shallow words like 'for all of our days'?

"Come, I will gift you a song that made millions of people cry!

"A never before heard vow is like a happy Ferris wheel.

"Only that can make me scream how deeply I love, love, love, love you."

The live studio audience and television viewers had never seen this side of Zhang Ye before. They were all shocked by it!

Zhang Ye's singing was too shocking. His voice was like a knife, cutting bit by bit into their hearts. There were no high notes, but his perfected singing could still reach them through the TV. This type singing was something they had not heard in Zhang Xia's or Chen Guang's performances. Even they could not achieve this!

How could someone who could write this sort of song have lost his touch!

How could someone who could sing like this be a fallen hero!

You were obviously standing at the peak!

So why?

Just why?

Many of the live studio audience members stood up!

Zhang Ye's face was dripping with sweat. He sang loudly.

"Wrote twenty songs for you to show that I haven't given up!

"And even included that your love went over the line!

"Singing these twenty songs for you to show that I mean it!

"Even the microphone feels for me!"

It's not that I don't know how to sing!

It's really not!

However many songs you guys want in the future, I can sing all of them for you!

Are five songs enough?

Are ten songs enough?

Are twenty songs enough?

I can sing them!

I can sing to all of you for my entire life, or even two lifetimes!

Then, he went quiet.

The air was still.

Zhang Ye closed his eyes.

"I'm more than anyone else,

"Yet you're saying that,

"the King of Karaoke, is me."

You're more than anyone else?

No one is your match?

The music critics in the front row looked at one another in shock!

Zhang Ye looked at everyone in the audience below stage: "I just wanted to always be in love with you.

"But that terribly ruthless yawn of yours, " utterly destroyed me.
"

The expression on all of their faces at this moment was shock!

A song could convey emotions and feelings. A song could also speak. In this instance, a lot of people realized that the incomparable Zhang Ye, who could even make the microphone feel for him, had only been singing those catchy tunes to make everyone laugh for one reason. They finally understood what this reason was. It was the only reason he didn't sing well even though he could!

He wasn't allowed to sing well!

He couldn't win!

Because he was the executive director!

Because he was the one who made the rules!

Anyone could win, except Zhang Ye!

After listening to the song.

Hu Fei understood!

Zhang Xia understood!

Xiaodong understood!

Amy understood!

A lot of people understood!

They only just realized how much Zhang Ye sacrificed for this show, for all of them, and for the audience. How much had he given and lost? It was much greater than they could have imagined. This was a sacrifice that no celebrity in the entertainment industry would ever want to pay the price for!

They should have known better!

Hu Fei took off his glasses and wiped his tears away with a sleeve.

Xiao Lu crouched down and cried with her head in her arms.

Many of the Beijing Television staff were crying!

All of a sudden, an angry roar came from the audience!

"Champion!"

A second voice shouted!

"Champion!"

A third one!

A fifth one!

A tenth one!

"Champion!"

"Champion!"

"Champion!"

"Champion!"

The entire audience got to their feet!

The entire audience was cheering in unison!

Xiao Lu raised her head to look at it with streaks of tears still visible on her cheeks!

Hu Fei, Hou Ge, and the others all looked at the audience in shock!

Chapter 1268: It's been hard on you!

At the Heavenly Queen's house.

Zhang Yuanqi turned her head and said with a smile, "Didn't you say that Zhang Ye doesn't know how to sing anymore?"

Fang Weihong feigned ignorance and gave a wry smile. "Did I say that, Sister Zhang?"

Zhang Yuanqi nodded. "I think you did."

"Oh, then you just remembered wrong," Fang Weihong said.

...

At Chen Guang and Fan Wenli's house.

Watching TV, Fan Wenli looked stunned!

She muttered to herself at home, "I knew it!

"I was thinking that you couldn't have suddenly lost your ability to sing!"

"If you had sung like this from the beginning, how many people in the entire music industry would be a match for you!"

...

At the studio.

Little Wang was wiping away her tears!

Ha Qiqi's eyes reddened!

Zhang Zuo and the others were also unable to control their emotions!

"Who fucking says that Director Zhang doesn't know how to sing!"

...

At an entertainment company.

Several new singers were amazed.

"Wonderful!"

"This singing has to be the top in the industry!"

"The song is really good too!"

...

At Zhang Ye's house.

His mother's eyes were wet. "This is the song that Little Ye wants to sing?"

Wu Zeqing said, "Yes."

"That was a really nice song."

"Yes, it was."

His mother wiped her tears away and said, "But I still prefer 'Small Apple.'"

Wu Zeqing laughed. "That's right, anything he sings is good."

...

A song.

And a piano.

That was all it took to move everyone!

In the live broadcast studio.

"Champion!"

"Champion!"

"Champion!"

The audience's shouting was deafening!

Some of the fans who had been holding up LED boards of Zhang Xia, Chen Guang, Spring Garden, and the other singers' names also stood up and screamed for Zhang Ye. It was as if everyone at the venue had gone crazy!

Zhang Ye simply shook his head.

Champion?

Forget that.

I can't accept that honor.

He only wanted to sing well for this last song. It was a luxury and a headstrong thing to do, but it was more than enough for him. He didn't want anything else. Zhang Ye was pretty happy. So many people listened to him sing, shed tears for him, and shouted his name, which was all he needed. He had nothing to regret now that he had expressed his true feelings at the fall of the curtain.

Dong Shanshan went up onstage. "Director Zhang, this is your final performance on the stage of I Am a Singer. Do you have anything to say to the audience?"

Zhang Ye thought for a bit and looked into the crowd. "Thank you."

Dong Shanshan said, "Everyone is given a minute to campaign for more votes."

Zhang Ye hesitated for a moment, then said again, "Thank you."

He didn't say anything other than thanking everyone twice.

Zhang Ye exited the stage and walked past the audience as he left.

A young man suddenly stood up. "Zhang Ye! Good luck!"

A teenage girl shouted in tears, "Go Teacher Zhang!"

"Zhang Ye!"

"Good luck!"

"You're the best!"

"You're just the best!"

Once he left the stage, Hu Fei, Hou Ge, and the others were waiting for him.

Zhang Ye smiled. "Whoa, what's with this?"

"Director Zhang!" Xiao Lu came up to him, sobbing.

"Hey, hey, hey." Zhang Ye quickly gave her a token hug and patted her on the back. "Alright, enough, what's with this, what's with all of you? Good god, we still have a show to record. With over half of our program team's senior leadership gathered here, can we still record? Let's get back to work."

Han Qi was also wiping away her tears.

Hu Fei said, "Zhang'er."

Dafei said emotionally, "You've suffered!"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "What do you mean I've suffered? Making such a good show and standing on such a big stage for so many people to hear me sing, how is that called suffering? If that is suffering, then what about those who are really suffering? I'm very fortunate. In fact, I should apologize to everyone. Changing the song, having everyone change the lyrics in a hurry, and getting a piano for the performance at the last minute during a live broadcast, I'm sorry, I promise this will be the only time it happens."

Hu Fei also laughed. "You're speaking like you haven't done this before."

During King of Masked Singers, he had requested a song change many times.

Zhang Ye said in embarrassment, "Brother Hu, don't expose me like that."

Hu Fei kept quiet for a moment. "Director Zhang, it's...been hard on you."

Zhang Ye said, "I was just serving the people, nothing hard about it."

Hou Ge said, "I don't think it's possible to catch up on in the

voting. The champion should have been—"

Zhang Ye waved it off. "Oh come on, we should leave that fight to Old Chen and Grandma Zhang."

Xiao Lu suddenly stopped crying. She turned around and said, "What's Shanshan saying?"

"Eh?" Dafei, Hou Ge, and the others also turned around to look.

The door that connected to the soundstage was shut, but faint sounds from inside could be heard from here.

When Zhang Ye heard it, he was also taken aback for a second.

...

On the stage.

A lot of the audience members were still immersed in the shock of that song, "The King of Karaoke."

Dong Shanshan raised her microphone and said quietly, "Since Zhang Ye does not want to ask for votes, let me use the remaining time to say something. I've known Zhang Ye for many years. We sat together for our four years in university as well as shared the same office cubicle for a year after our graduation. Later on, we even worked together on quite a few shows and also shot a music video together. If we have to identify those in the industry who know him best, I should probably count as one of them. All of you should know full well what kind of a personality he has. He's very straightforward and always speaks his mind, doing whatever he deems fit. But to tell you the truth, today's also my first time seeing him like this."

The audience nodded.

Yes, they've never seen him like this before!

Dong Shanshan smiled and said, "That guy's always eager to win. Be it any competition, even if it's just a simple comparison, he always wants to get first place." With a pause, she continued, "But

he did not do so this time. Ever since joining the show as a competitor, he's also been working in his roles as the director, vote counter, and host. He was fine with however much overtime he had to put in at work, just so that the show would be able to go on without a hitch. In order to protect the other singers, he endured? Compromised? Kept silent? In the past, these were words that I would never link to Zhang Ye. But I saw all of that in him this time. It's only now that I realized that the Zhang Ye I knew could sacrifice so much. For the show, for his colleagues, for the greater good, he was willing to endure it and take a step back."

The audience went silent.

In the crowd, the music critics and fellow professionals were also silent.

Dong Shanshan smiled and said, "The reason why I'm saying this is not because I want to get votes for Zhang Ye. I just wanted to tell him this. Director Zhang, it's been hard on you."

Silence.

There was not a sound.

Then, in the span of a pin dropping, applause broke out from the audience!

The music critics were applauding!

The audience was applauding!

There were even some people who stood up and gave a thumbs up high in the air!

One person!

Ten people!

A 100 people!

The cameras panned over to them instantly!

Countless audience members were giving a thumbs up in the

direction of the door that Zhang Ye had left through. The sight was astonishing, and every home viewer also felt very touched when they saw this on TV!

They had not understood!

Didn't Zhang Ye lose his ability to sing?

Then how did he suddenly regain that ability?

After listening to Dong Shanshan's speech, they finally understood!

So it was because he was only here to accompany them!

So it was because he had been protecting everyone all this while!

So it was because he couldn't win right from the moment he took on the role of the singer-host. He was destined to be a supporting role working in the shadows of the others!

What kind of feeling was that?

What kinds of emotions did he feel?

It was something they couldn't understand, but they knew that this was an extremely difficult choice for a person like Zhang Ye to take!

Chapter 1269: Be serious, we're showing off here!

On Weibo.

The netizens were getting very excited!

"I was wrong!"

"Motherfucker, I take back the words I said about Zhang Ye!"

"I'll take my words back too. I've already deleted my old Weibo posts!"

"In so many years of listening to people sing, this is the first time I've shed a tear while listening to a song, fuck!"

"So it wasn't that he didn't know how to sing anymore. It was just that he couldn't do it. It was only because we've come to the final round of the grand finals when he could no longer catch up in voting that he finally sang for real!"

"It's too good!"

"I'm crying too, my tears are falling all over the place!"

"To put a person like Zhang Ye onstage and not allow him to sing properly? That was probably even worse than killing him! It really wasn't easy!"

"I won't slander Zhang Ye anymore in the future!"

"Passerby transforming into a fan!"

"Fan transforming into a diehard fan!"

"Me too. Diehard fan transforming into a braindead fan!"

"'The King of Karaoke' is so touching!"

"Ahhh, how can it be so good!"

"Let's vote for it!"

"Yeah, let's vote for Zhang Ye!"

"I've already done so!"

Zhang Ye's fans all came out of the woodwork!

Zhang Ye's fan club, which had maintained a low profile, appeared out of the blue and overwhelmed Weibo, the forums, and Tieba with the force of an avalanche!

"Please vote for Zhang Ye!"

"He can't win anymore."

"I know, but we have to at least let Teacher Zhang know that we're still around!"

"Right!"

"Please vote!"

"Let Teacher Zhang know that we're here!"

Dong Shanshan's fan club also appeared.

"Count us in!"

"Vote for Zhang Ye!"

"Our friends from Zhang Ye's fan club, we're here!"

"As allies, we must support Zhang Ye!"

Yao Jiancai's fans also popped up!

"We're here, we're here!"

"How can the party start without us!"

"Old Yao's fans, let's all vote for Zhang Ye!"

"OK!"

"Like that needs to be said!"

Fan Wenli suddenly posted on Weibo: "I just cried. It was an indescribable feeling. Although Old Chen and Grandma Zhang both sang very well, my vote will still go to Zhang Ye. I don't even

have someone else that I want to vote for, I just want to vote for him."

Below, many replies came in.

"Sister Fan, aren't you going to support your husband?"

"faints Sister Fan has defected!"

"Looks like Zhang Ye really did sing well!"

"Alright, I'm gonna vote for Zhang Ye too."

Suddenly, Zhang Yuanqi's manager appeared.

Fang Weihong posted on Weibo with a screenshot of her vote on her cell phone: "Sister Zhang and I are watching I Am a Singer's live broadcast together. We've just voted for Zhang Ye. There's nothing to say except that it was spectacular!"

Many of the netizens exclaimed.

"Even the Heavenly Queen has voted for Zhang Ye?"

"I thought that Sister Zhang would vote for Grandma Zhang!"

"Wow!"

"That was unexpected!"

"Zhang Ye's last song moved so many people!"

"It didn't only move us, it shocked us!"

"Yeah, I got the goosebumps all over!"

Even though they knew he couldn't win!

Even though they knew there was no time left!

A lot of people were still voting for Zhang Ye!

The live broadcast continued.

Amy.

Xiaodong.

Chen Guang.

Zhang Xia.

Everyone took their turn.

As the live broadcast neared its end, the grand champion was going to be revealed!

Countless people were either seated in the live studio or before their televisions waiting to see the final results.

In her flowing red dress, Dong Shanshan held the results with the rankings on it and announced, "The grand champion of the grand finals of the first season of I Am a Singer is—" With a deliberate pause, she raised her head and looked into the audience before saying the singer's name, "Zhang Xia!"

Zhang Xia was startled, clearly not expecting this!

Applause from the audience rang out!

Chen Guang applauded with a smile on his face!

Xiaodong applauded in celebration of Zhang Xia's win!

Zhang Ye gave her a thumbs up!

The number of votes was displayed on the big screen, and the champion emerged. Zhang Xia had beaten the favorite, Chen Guang, by just a few votes to take the title of champion for the first season of I Am a Singer. This title was undoubtedly a big deal to Zhang Xia as it signified her switch from bel canto to pop music. It was also the greatest affirmation to the achievements of Zhang Xia's work in the artistic singing field over the years!

On the same night.

The news reported on this!

"Zhang Xia wins title of grand champion!"

"Chen Guang defeated in the grand finals!"

"Zhang Xia reaches the peak of her career!"

"Zhang Ye's amazing performance in the grand finals!"

"The mystery behind Zhang Ye's non-singing!"

"Unveiling the secret backstory of I Am a Singer!"

"'The King of Karaoke' drops onto the Internet!"

"I Am a Singer's viewership ratings defy the heavens by surpassing 4%!"

"Zhang Ye creates yet another legend in the variety field!"

"A successful finale to I Am a Singer. Surprises, shock, and regrets!"

The dust settled.

The public also expressed their opinions.

"This is such a great show. Zhang Ye is indeed deserving of being called the best director in our domestic variety show market. I really have to give that to him!"

"That's right, I've never watched such a good show before. If Zhang Ye stops making variety shows, I Am a Singer might just go on to become a monumental standard in the industry forever, with no one else able to surpass it. The only regrettable thing was that Zhang Ye did not become the grand champion!"

"That was such a pity!"

"To me, the grand champion is Zhang Ye!"

"Just with 'The King of Karaoke' alone, Zhang Ye deserved to be the grand champion. That one song can easily top 10 or 20 songs by the others!"

"Yeah, didn't Grandma Zhang also say that when she won the title of grand champion? She said that she was rather lucky to be holding the trophy. Thinking about it now, it was truly very hard on Zhang Ye. Does anyone still remember the 'Zhang Ye Sprawl' that went viral recently? I found it really funny at that time, but looking at it again now, I feel a little sad. He is the greatest contributor behind the scenes, yet he didn't get crowned as the

grand champion in the end."

"Will there be a second season?"

"Of course there will!"

"I hope that Zhang Ye will return for the second season!"

"Yeah, don't make Zhang Ye the director when the time comes. Let him take part as a competitor so that he can sing whatever he wants. We owe him a title!"

At this moment.

Zhang Ye's fan club's current leader spoke.

Big Saber Bro: "Brothers and sisters of our fan club, allow me to say a word or two. Ever since Teacher Zhang became famous, regardless of scolding battles, bumping threads, competitions, or viewership ratings, we have never lost before, not once. But this time, we lost. I know that this is because Teacher Zhang is not supposed to become the grand champion. He didn't sing well because he couldn't do so. He had to ensure that the show would not have any flaws or controversies. But the fact remains that we've lost. I know that everyone must not be feeling good and probably feel sorry for Teacher Zhang. I feel the same as you guys; I also can't calm down. As the stand-in leader of the fan club, let me guarantee one thing to all of you today. This will be the first time we lose, and also the last time we lose! From here on out, we'll never lose again!"

In an instant, tens of thousands of people responded!

"Alright!"

"Understood!"

"Got it!"

"Got it!"

"Got it!"

"Got it!"

Quite a few netizens watching this quietly clicked their tongues!

Who could ever guarantee that they would win forever? Never lose again? Who would ever dare to make such claims? In the entire entertainment circle, was there anyone who dared to say something like that? No matter how you thought about it, only these fearless fans of Zhang Ye's would dare to say such a thing! These people were really not afraid or worried about anything!

Their momentum was too strong!

Zhang Ye had too many people on his side!

In the end, this post actually made it to the front page of Weibo. Below the post, the replies from Zhang Ye's army of fans were getting showier and more posturing!

"We won't lose again!"

"We owe Zhang Ye the title of grand champion!"

"We'll take that title someday!"

"Whatever we've lost, we'll take it back with our own hands!"

"Wow, we're on the front page. This is great, hehehe!"

"Hey, be serious. We're showing off here!"

The industry was speechless!

The netizens were all watching!

Finally, even Zhang Ye himself was flushed out. Seeing this group of people's declarations of war, he also got quite a shock. He immediately said to Big Saber Bro: "Sis, can we be more low-key? Please?"

How could I not lose?

Do you think I'm a god!

You even want me to take the title?

Are you asking me to go and steal the trophy from Grandma Zhang's house?!

However, Big Saber Bro replied with: "Go away, it's none of your business."

ZhangYeFan#22: "Go away, it's none of your business."

AIDDD: "Go away, it's none of your business."

FlyFlewFlown: "Go away, it's none of your business."

OnlyConvincedByTeacherZhang: "Go away, it's none of your business."

Ctrl+C, Ctrl+V!

A bunch of Zhang Ye's fans were cypypasting!

What do you mean it's none of my business!

This is totally my fucking business!

Zhang Ye nearly vomited blood. These fuckers!

The countless netizens were greatly amused. Hahahahaha! This was such a funny scene that could only happen between Zhang Ye and his own fan club. Of all the celebrities' fan clubs in the country, the most disparate group was Zhang Ye's fan base. Yet, it was also this group of Zhang Ye's troll army that was not to be provoked. If they got frustrated, even Zhang Ye would have to bear their scolding. Once they got their showy swagger going, they wouldn't even leave a shred of respect for Zhang Ye. But if anyone else were to scold Zhang Ye, they would never allow it. They would take it up with the offender and make sure they wouldn't get away "alive.". Frankly, each was weirder than the last. There were really no others like them!

A comedic celebrity!

And a comedic bunch of fans!

In the entire Chinese entertainment industry, you wouldn't be

able to find another group like them!

Chapter 1270: Countdown to the big wedding!

The next day.

At home.

Zhang Ye slept until noon.

He couldn't help it. His recent days had been a nightmare. It was always all about work the moment he opened his eyes. Even when he was asleep, he would be dreaming that he was instructing the staff at work. Going home for a warm meal felt like he had been given a long vacation from work. The show's planning, directing, tasking, vote counting, hosting, and managing of singers were all overseen by Zhang Ye. No details that happened within the program team did not involve Zhang Ye's decision. As a result, you could imagine how tiring it was for him. He really couldn't get any rest throughout an entire day. The show had finally come to a successful end yesterday, and Zhang Ye's mission was complete. He dozed off the moment he laid down and slept until now. If it weren't for his mother coming to wake him up, he could probably have laid in bed for three whole days and nights.

The door opened.

His mother said, "Son, get up."

Zhang Ye yawned. "Is breakfast ready?"

"Breakfast?" His mother said amused, "The sun is shining on your butt. Get up and brush your teeth, it's time for lunch. Hurry, I've cooked all the dishes that you like."

Zhang Ye got up from bed. "OK."

His father was working in the living room. "Little Ye, did you silence your cell phone? Ha Qiqi from your studio called our house just now, but your mother wouldn't let me wake you up."

His mother harrumphed and said, "Wake him up for what? Do you want my son to get worked to death!"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "It might be business. I'll drop by the studio later this afternoon."

His mother said, "Your business now is to rest up for a few days. Don't keep running around."

Zhang Ye scoffed. "It's not like you don't know me. I've never been one to idle. Besides, I'm preparing for a big job!"

"Which bank are you robbing?" his mother asked.

Zhang Ye said floored, "Why would I be robbing a bank!"

His mother chuckled and said, "If you have the time, you should be taking those fans of yours in hand first. They caused a ruckus that lasted past midnight. I kept seeing the ruckus they were making all over Weibo."

Zhang Ye waved his hand and said, "Heh, don't even bring those jerks up. I get angry at the mention of them. Look, all of them are even better at showing off than me. They've totally stolen this bro's thunder by shouting those slogans and whatnot. Won't lose again? In the end, doesn't it all still depend on me? Those people are too unreliable!"

His mother said, "Well, they learned from you."

Zhang Ye: "When did I ever teach them that?"

His mother said, "In any case, you've never taught them anything good."

Zhang Ye had no reply.

His mother said, "Hurry up and eat. When you finish, your dad and I will be going out too."

Zhang Ye asked, "To do what?"

His mother said, "To plan your wedding, of course. The hotel has

already been decided on, and it was even the Wus who found the place. We cannot continue to let them worry about the wedding. For the other matters, I'll be going with your dad to discuss with the relevant parties. There are still quite a few things that we need to order, like the flower baskets, the letterings, the decorations, and the wedding dress. I think you and Little Wu should go and choose that yourselves. Oh, the wedding photos have to be taken in advance too. Don't leave it til the last minute and end up trying to catch up. And there are the wedding invitations as well. I'll need a list from you so that I know who'll be invited, then you can leave the rest to me."

Zhang Ye broke into a smile. "Dad, mom, it's been hard on you both."

His mother cut him off. "Save it."

Later that afternoon.

At the studio.

"Director Zhang is here!"

"Director Zhang!"

"You're finally here. Have you seen it yet?"

"It's amazing!"

The moment he arrived, everyone started chattering.

Zhang Ye said, "Seen what? I just woke up."

"The popularity rankings, of course." Ha Qiqi said with a laugh, "The latest rankings have been published again. We've already sorted it out for you, so please have a look at your current popularity score."

It was only then that Zhang Ye remembered that the Celebrity Rankings Index should have been refreshed at midnight last night. Ever since making the show I Am a Singer, Zhang Ye had been focused on Beijing Television. He hadn't really been checking on

the rankings index much, so it was now time to analyze the results thus far. The fifth step of the "Reach the Summit" plan had been successfully completed, but as for how much of an impact it had, that would still have to depend on how he did in the Celebrity Rankings Index.

After getting hold of the statistics charts.

The first thing Zhang Ye saw surprised him very much. "Whoa! This much?"

Zhang Zuo belly laughed. "During yesterday's update, your popularity score increased by a huge amount!"

"There are numbers from earlier too." Little Wang pointed to the form and said, "Look here, this is during the time I Am a Singer's first episode was broadcast. This was for the second episode. This one was the episode where you took on the role as the singer-host and participated in the competition. It was also at the start of this episode that your popularity score jumped up in steps. It kept increasing by the day, until yesterday, when it went up by the most. It's too scary!"

Tong Fu smiled and corrected, "You must mean it's terrifying!"

Zhang Ye snapped his fingers. "That's pretty good."

He was still in first place in the A-list rankings, but his popularity score was no longer the same as before!

This fifth step of the "Reach the Summit" plan had brought him an unimaginable amount of popularity!

Whether it was the show's heaven-defying and record-breaking viewership ratings, or Zhang Ye being the executive director who announced the singers' rankings in each episode, or Zhang Ye joining as a competitor and hosting the show, then debuting those songs like "I Feel So Drained," "The Hottest Ethnic Trend," "Small Apple," "Nonsense Has Its Nonsense Logic," and "The King of Karaoke," all of it had brought Zhang Ye a great deal of attention.

Especially for "The King of Karaoke." It was now sweeping the various music charts to the point that the two songs performed by Zhang Xia in the grand finals combined were not one-third as popular as "The King of Karaoke"!

This show had really helped a lot of people become very popular.

Like Zhang Xia.

Like Chen Guang.

Like Xiaodong.

Like Dong Shanshan.

Even a has-been celebrity like Zhao Wuliu was getting more attention and becoming popular again because of the show. Two months ago, Zhao Wuliu's commercial appearances would only command a fee of several hundred thousand RMB. But now the rumors were that a single song performed by him would fetch close to a million RMB in fees, as highlighted by his recent concert at a rich businessman's wedding. But of course, nobody really knew whether that was true.

Let alone the others!

Their popularity was exploding with growth!

But if there was really a need to pinpoint who experienced the greatest growth in popularity, that person would definitely not be Zhang Xia, nor Chen Guang, much less Dong Shanshan!

It would be Zhang Ye!

He didn't take the role of the executive director for nothing!

The plaza dance wave was not for nothing too!

Even more, "The King of Karaoke" amazed the nation!

Zhang Ye undoubtedly reaped the most benefit!

Ha Qiqi laughed and said, "The fifth step of Reach the Summit was completed just perfectly. It was definitely completed with the

most outstanding result and was much better than we had expected. At that time, we were still thinking that it would be best to do a reality TV show and believed that a show like I Am a Singer would not be the best choice. Unexpectedly, Director Zhang had to compete. Although it was pretty tiring and he didn't win grand champion, the effects were still much better than what a reality TV show could achieve. That was really the most unexpected gain of all. We're now getting closer and closer to those seven spots above us. No, I shouldn't put it that way. I mean to say we're finally able to see those seven spots before us!"

Little Wang snickered. "More importantly, no one else seems to have realized it yet."

Zhang Zuo gave a wry smile. "Don't count on that. We can't keep this a secret for much longer. I think they'll find out soon."

Ha Qiqi nodded and said, "Director Zhang's popularity score isn't that far apart from theirs. I believe we can't hide this fact for long either. As of now, those seven people have yet to come to their senses and are not thinking about this. After all, the Heavenly King and Queens' spots haven't changed in many, many years. They're used to the fact that no one can catch up to them. By the time they realize what's going on and start preparing, that's when the real fight will begin. It will definitely be a bloody battle, so we should be trying to catch up as much as possible while they haven't yet realized."

Wu Yi said, "But we should at least give Director Zhang some time to rest. He's been overworked in recent days."

Hearing that, Zhang Ye laughed and said, "I'm fine. There's no need to be so considerate of me. I've said that if I don't get into the S-list, I'll never rest. If there are any good projects, let's hurry up and take them. We'll push for higher popularity while they haven't noticed. I slept all day yesterday, so I've recovered pretty well. When it comes to stamina? Energy? No one in the entire entertainment industry would dare to claim they are number one

if I say I am number two!"

This was not an exaggeration!

A guy who was infinitesimally close to becoming a martial arts grandmaster was in no way comparable to a normal person.

Zhang Zuo said, "Actually, there's no need to rush."

Zhang Ye waved his hand and said, "We have to, hur hur. Because in another few days, I'll probably have to take five to ten days off from work. I won't be able to work on those days, so we have to make the most of it right now."

"Apply for leave?"

"Why?"

"What are you going to do?"

Everyone was surprised.

Then they saw Zhang Ye smile and say, "I'm taking time off to get married!"

Ha Qiqi was stunned. "In just a few days?"

Little Wang said in surprise, "Right away?"

Zhang Ye nodded and said, "It's currently getting arranged, so it should be very soon!"

The wedding was slated for this year anyway, so the day was about to arrive!

Instantly, congratulatory voices filled the studio!

"Congratulations!"

"Congratulations, Director Zhang!"

"Hope you have a lifetime of love and happiness!"

"May you be blessed with a child soon!"

"Just who is our sister-in-law going to be?"

"When are we getting a raise, Director Zhang? I don't have any money left to contribute to your wedding gift!"

"When are you and Sister-in-law going to have a child?"

This last sentence was a shot to Zhang Ye's heart!

I haven't even touched her yet, so why are we talking about a child!

Chapter 1271: Zhang Ye starts livestreaming!

Two days later.

Noon.

On the Third Ring Road.

Zhang Ye was in his car when his cell phone rang. From the caller ID, he saw that it was from Wu Mo, the CEO of the Brain Gold Company. He answered with a smile.

"Hey, Mo'er."

"Brother Zhang, are you for real?"

"What for real?"

"You're getting married to my aunt?"

"You just found out?"

"Aiyo, your answer really makes me want to beat you up, my Brother Zhang. No one told me! So how would I know! Do you think I'm a fortune teller? I just happened to be sending over some things to my aunt's place at the courtyard house when I heard that she was getting married. The news nearly made me faint! When did you two get together? How on earth did you manage to get her to go steady with you? Aren't you too capable? My aunt has really, really high standards!"

"Look at yourself, describing it that way. What do you mean by getting her to go steady with me?"

"So does that mean that I have to address you as uncle from now on?"

"Yeah, we're going to be relatives."

"Yet you still asked me for 200 million for the title sponsorship of I Am a Singer? Didn't you say we're relatives?"

"Well, we still haven't married, have we?"

"What the heck! It always comes back to you, doesn't it?"

"That's right."

"You guys are too good at keeping it a secret. It's such a big affair but I only just found out about it!"

"Do help me out a little for the wedding, alright?"

"Don't even think about it. You and my aunt are too shady."

"Haha, let's stop talking, I have to get to my show."

"Your first livestreamed show? I saw the promotions for it."

"Don't forget to donate to me later."

"Donate? I'll go on and libel you instead!"

"Alright, come at me then."

After some good-natured ribbing, they finally hung up.

Yang Shu was wearing a pair of sunglasses and driving.

Next to Zhang Ye were Ha Qiqi, Little Wang, a couple others.

The show that Zhang Ye was going to today was extremely important. He was going to livestream 1 , which had become very popular in recent years, for the first time. This was different from the live broadcasts and recordings on television and could be considered an industry of its own. As such, it had its own business model and rules to adhere to. The job was only accepted after the studio staff selected it and made very careful considerations on behalf of Zhang Ye. Right now, he was going to the place to hold his debut livestream.

Why did he choose to livestream?

Because the interest in this new platform was so high!

Back when the livestreaming industry had just gotten off to a start, it was not really something people cared about. Especially

the more popular celebrities in the entertainment industry, they cared even less. They believed that such platforms were inferior to the ones they were currently performing on. But as the industry took off and exploded, many celebrities could not help but turn their sights to it. Some celebrities were eyeing the popularity and advertising fees they could get on these sites, as one after another, celebrities tested the waters in this new industry. Among them, there was no shortage of A-list celebrities trying their luck.

It was simple.

Convenient.

And had a large audience base.

—These were the advantages of a streaming channel.

In the car.

Ha Qiqi passed Zhang Ye something. "Director Zhang, please have another look at the show outline for today."

"That's not necessary," Zhang Ye chuckled as he waved it off. "I should at least be able to handle something like that, shouldn't I?"

Ha Qiqi said helplessly, "You may have done many live TV broadcasts and seen a lot of big events, but this is another industry. During the recording of our TV shows, you can just stand there and the audience is bound to give you respect since it's face to face. Surely they wouldn't start cursing and throwing shoes onto the stage, right? Even if they do, security will chase them out. But it's different for streaming. Who cares what your status is? If they don't like it and feel like scolding you, you oughta at least be prepared for it."

Zhang Ye said, "When it comes to scolding, I'm even less afraid."

Little Wang laughed, "Pfft!"

Tong Fu said, "Do you intend to have a scolding battle with them?"

Everyone in the car laughed.

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Alright, let's not joke anymore. Sister Ha is correct. Since we're going onto another's platform, we have to respect their rules. That's a given."

Ha Qiqi brought up her worries. "I'm just afraid that you won't be able to manage it. The people here aren't interested in things that are high-class and artistic. It's not that they can't appreciate it, but that the atmosphere in a stream makes it not the place for appreciating such subjects. So, even songs like... 'Small Apple' probably won't work. There isn't any lighting and stage equipment to bring up the atmosphere during a stream, so you probably have to pay extra attention if you're going to sing. As an example, Teacher Chen was invited to stream at the beginning of the year. He also did so on the same site that we'll be broadcasting on today. The moment he went live, he brought out three songs, singing rock songs, as well as performing in falsetto. He threw out all his abilities, and even though a lot of people watched it, the reactions were only so-so. Coincidentally on that same day, a popular female streamer on the same site was celebrating her birthday. A bunch of people helped raise her streaming channel's popularity points by donating a total of 1.6 million RMB in just a day. Meanwhile, it was much quieter on Old Chen's channel. He only received around 300,000 RMB worth of donations. Although the quantity and value of these donations do not represent everything, his impact still got pushed down by one of the site's own streamers. That was really too face smacking!"

One was a B-list celebrity.

The other was a streamer who wasn't even qualified to be called an E-list celebrity.

As such, the results were even more face smacking when put in comparison.

Zhang Ye said with a laugh, "Old Chen even has a story like that?"

Little Wang said, "Quite a lot of the media outlets latched onto this news at the time too. That female streamer who held Chen Guang off also got rather popular after the incident. The fact remains that the streamers who are part of the site have a much greater influence than us. If we encounter another female streamer who is celebrating her birthday, that would be quite troublesome for us. I believe that the incident that happened during Teacher Chen Guang's livestream was actually carried out on purpose by that female streamer. She was deliberately stealing his show."

Tong Fu said, "Will anyone come and create trouble for us today?"

But Zhang Ye said, "They're free to stream whenever they want. It's not something that we should be bothered about, right? Let's just concentrate on making our own stream good and it'll be enough."

This was going to be his last job before the wedding. Starting from the day after tomorrow, Zhang Ye would be taking leave from work to properly prepare for the wedding. The progress of Reach the Summit was going smoothly, and they were not far from implementing the last step of the plan. But before that happened, they would have to wait for Zhang Ye's wedding to take place. As such, today's livestream was going to be the final chance for him to gain on those seven S-list celebrities. They had to take this chance before their agencies realized what was going on and before the media caught onto Zhang Ye's plan to surpass the A-list rankings. He definitely had to gain as much popularity as he could so that he could "surprise" everyone and let them know how much danger their positions were in!

Ahead.

The car arrived at the destination.

Yang Shu, his junior martial sister, dutifully got out of the car and opened the car door.

Zhang Ye stepped out.

Little Wang picked up Zhang Ye's coat and put it over him.

Ha Qiqi went forward to talk with the streaming site's staff.

"Manager Ha!"

"Boss Chen, we've arrived."

"Welcome, welcome. Teacher Zhang, please proceed inside."

"Boss Chen, you don't have to stand on ceremony with us."

"Teacher Zhang is usually very busy, so you must not be familiar with our livestreaming industry. How about this? Let me take you guys around the company to have a look. The streaming studio has already been set up."

"Sure. Thank you for all your hard work, Boss Chen."

The group of them walked inside and were chatting and laughing.

Through their conversation, the site's boss both intentionally and unintentionally let them know more about the site's livestreaming rules. He touched on topics like what was popular, and how to interact with the fans. Their site had spent a good deal of money to invite Zhang Ye to appear on their livestreaming site and managed to sign him for his first ever livestream. They were definitely hoping to make use of Zhang Ye's popularity to raise the name of their site and user experience, so they naturally hoped that Zhang Ye could do well enough for both parties to gain something from it. As for why they explained in such detail to Zhang Ye, it was because they assumed that he did not understand a thing about livestreaming. They thought that he would think that it was the same as a recording a television show and were afraid that Zhang Ye would not know how to translate his success to this platform. They probably had the impression that Zhang Ye had never even watched a livestream before!

The Internet livestreaming of this world was still standardized.

Listening to them, Zhang Ye could not help but smile in silence.

You people are wrong. This bro has seen much more than any of you. Just this small matter here is nothing compared to what I have seen before! I don't know? I've never watched a livestream before?

Have you all seen someone poke a hornet's nest on a stream before?

Have you all seen people robbing a grave on a stream before?

Have you all seen people write code on a stream before?

Have you all seen people kneeling on a keyboard on a stream before?

Have you seen people getting it on on a stream before?

No, right?

You all have not seen any of those before, right?

Hur hur.

I! Have! Seen! It! All!

Chapter 1272: The attack of the site's female streamers!

"Zhang Ye's debut livestream lands at Meihe TV!"

Meihe TV was one of the largest livestreaming sites in the Chinese market and had ample capital. The site had signed many streamers under its brand name, and the user base was one of the top two in the country. They had invested a large sum of money to get Zhang Ye to come and livestream on their site. The promotions for it were carried out in full swing with the ads running for several days.

On Weibo.

"Zhang Ye is going to start streaming soon!"

"I saw the ads for it since a few days ago."

"Yeah, there's still half an hour until it begins!"

"I'm really looking forward to it."

"Is he going to sing or something?"

"Who knows? I'll join the channel first!"

"Hahaha, I've already been waiting there for 30 minutes."

"I'm here! Damn, the livestream still hasn't started? The screen is still dark, but there's more than 300,000 viewers? What's with everyone?"

"This is Zhang Ye we're talking about, do you think he can't command at least that number of viewers who want to watch him?"

"Pfft, everyone's spamming the channel with messages. It's so funny."

In Zhang Ye's channel, all that could be seen on the stream was a massive amount of scrolling comments.

"Why is that fella not here yet?—Where is Zhang Ye?—Hurry up and start streaming already!—Gogogo—I've been waiting the whole day for you, hurry up!—Zhang Ye must be squatting in the bathroom—Zhang Ye didn't bring any toilet paper with him, so he can't get out of there—Someone quickly pass a roll of toilet paper to Zhang Ye—I'm waiting for the show to begin—Reserving a spot in advance—Haha, I came in early because I was afraid I would get locked out—Wow, there are already 400,000 people waiting in here?—This scammer's pretty popular it seems—Yeah, there no sign of him yet but there are already 400,000 people waiting—The record for a Meihe TV channel is only around a million concurrent viewers, right?—Pfft, it was especially funny when Old Chen livestreamed. He actually got destroyed by Himi—Himi is too good at hyping up her streams—The thing is, she reveals a lot of skin—Damn, who dares talk bad about my Himi?—Eh, Himi is also going to start streaming soon—What? At this time?—Wow, Sister Yiyi is also announcing in her chat group that she's going to start streaming soon too—They're all doing it because of Zhang Ye—Hahahaha, Zhang Ye's getting attacked!—I like seeing this, why am I so happy?—Haha, me too—"

In the streamers' chat group.

Himi: "Sisters, I'm going in first!"

Sister Yiyi: "All the best, we must fight back!"

Hooo: "Yes, show him what we can do and who has the most popularity and influence on our turf. Zhang Ye's just a mainstream celebrity, how could he know anything about streaming. He's surely going to just sing some songs or whatnot, all those boring activities. He doesn't know what the users on these online livestreaming sites like to see. Comparing professionalism, how could he be better than us? No one else can be more professional than us when it comes to this."

Another female streamer said: "Right, I also don't like these mainstream celebrities. They don't even understand what

livestreaming is and they're here to try to get a piece of the popularity pie. Who do they think they are? What makes them so qualified that the site has to spend millions just to invite them and promote their activities while we veterans have to advance slowly in the industry? I really can't accept this! If it were any other industry, I would have nothing to say. He is indeed very famous in the mainstream. But on livestreaming sites, I don't believe that we can't beat him if we gang up on him!"

"That's right!"

"Sisters, the time has come for us to uphold our dignity!"

"Alright, let's show him what it means to be a professional streamer!"

The group of female streamers were in a frenzy.

There were also a few male streamers who came forward to show their support.

But at the same time, some others didn't whether to laugh or cry.

Xixi typed: "My sisters and brothers, surely we don't have to go that far, right? Teacher Zhang coming to our site for his debut show is also a chance for our site to grow further. This can bring more fans to our site, and if the audience retention is good, they might turn into our fans in the future. Why are you all so agitated?"

A quarrel broke out in the chat group!

"Xixi, you're a diehard fan of Zhang Ye's, so there's no place for you to speak!"

"Right, you wouldn't understand even if we explain it to you!"

"So what if I'm a Zhang Ye fan? You all can hype up your own streams all you want, but do you all have to attempt to squeeze out my Teacher Zhang?"

"It's fine if you don't want to join our cause!"

"Sisters, ignore her. Let's do it!"

"Alright, I'll go beyond my usual sexiness today!"

"Do it!"

"I'll go and get changed!"

"Strip! Strip! Strip!"

The group of streamers began their streams amid the ruckus!

Himi started her stream.

A pretty face appeared onscreen. "Hi, everyone, did you miss me? I'm starting the stream earlier today as I have something to do tonight. I heard that there will be a celebrity streaming later, so I hope that you guys won't abandon me here by myself, alright? Don't do it, that would make me really sad!"

With that.

The comments started flooding onto the screen.

"No, we won't!"

"pats Himi!"

"I'll only be watching you today, no one else!"

"Zhang Ye's a dick, who cares about him!"

"Right, this lord will send you presents today, all the presents that you want!"

"That's right, don't make Little Sis Himi sad. Everyone, start sending presents!"

Sister Yiyi started streaming.

The moment she came on, she gave three kisses to the camera.

Her group of fans and "whales" in the channel started catcalling!

"Sister Yiyi is so beautiful today!"

"You've so little clothes on? I like it!"

" Big! It's so big!"

"My eyes are bedazzled!"

Hooo started her stream.

Hooo: "Does everyone still remember? It's my birthday today, so I hope that everyone can send me more presents, please? I would like to break the record for the total amount of donations received, can you guys help me with that? What? I just celebrated my birthday last month? Yes, that's because it's my birthday on the Gregorian calendar today. If I receive enough presents, I'll be dishing out some goodies afterwards~"

"Ahhh!"

"What goodies?"

"I'm coming!"

"Send! Send! Send!"

"I won't be watching Zhang Ye's stream anymore. I'll just stay here and wait for the goodies!"

In an instant, Meihe TV devolved into pandemonium!

With a little less than half of the most popular streamers starting their streams, the remaining popular streamers showed no signs of activities. Meanwhile, some of the lesser known streamers on the site did not join in the commotion over here. That was because they knew this wasn't something that they could afford to have a part in. All they could do was watch quietly.

It was a tragedy back when Chen Guang tried his hand at livestreaming.

They wanted to see if Zhang Ye would follow in his footsteps.

Those ladies were not easy to deal with at all!

...

Elsewhere.

On Zhang Ye's channel.

"Haha, he's been attacked from all over!"

"Zhang Ye will be in tears soon!"

"Those female streamers are too aggressive!"

"Yeah, they're all appearing one after another. This is totally an siege tactic!"

"Fuck, I really don't know what I can say. Don't they know that even with this site's male and female streamers combined, even if their popularity were to be multiplied by a hundred times, they still couldn't win against Zhang Ye?"

"That might not necessarily be true. Those people are much more professional at streaming."

"Yeah, this site is not Zhang Ye's home turf after all, so he really might not be able to win against them."

The livestreaming site also realized something was going on!

The boss flew into a rage thinking about what was going on! Why were those ladies causing so much trouble! It was supposed to be Zhang Ye's livestreaming debut, so what the heck were they joining in the commotion for!

Were they trying to hype up their channels?

Were they trying to steal the show?

Even if they were, they should know what day to do it on!

He could let it slide for the incident involving Chen Guang. But it was Zhang Ye who was here today, the biggest name who had the most attention in the country at the moment! If you all were to drive this important guest of mine away in anger, I'll definitely kill all of you!

There was still a minute left in the countdown.

Zhang Ye's team was getting prepared for the stream.

Zhang Ye was also seated in the streaming studio, familiarizing himself with the navigation and taking note of the controls. Then he received a call.

It was Fan Wenli.

Zhang Ye answered with a smile: "Old Fan, what's up?"

"Have you started streaming yet?" Fan Wenli asked.

"Not yet, but I will soon," Zhang Ye answered.

Fan Wenli said worriedly: "Be careful, both Old Chen and I are also watching. Old Chen's stream was affected by one of the female streamers. It seems like they've discussed it again after tasting success the last time and are planning on attacking you. Let me count, one, two, three—there are a total of five streamers who have just started streaming. I don't know if they're the most popular streamers since I don't really pay attention to this industry, but just watch out."

Zhang Ye laughed: "Sure, Sister Fan. Thanks!"

Over the phone, he could hear Chen Guang's voice. "That's enough, Wenli."

Fan Wenli said, "What's enough?"

Chen Guang laughed and said, "With Zhang Ye's ability, would they be able to push him down? You're really funny."

Zhang Ye was amused and said: "It's still Old Chen who understands me."

The call ended.

The boss's secretary entered the room.

The secretary immediately said, "Teacher Zhang, sorry about it, but a situation has occurred on the site. A few streamers are causing trouble and trying to steal the show. We've sent our people to give them a warning, so it should get settled soon."

Ha Qiqi froze.

Little Wang was dumbfounded.

What?

They were really trying to mess things up?

However, Zhang Ye said, "It's fine, Secretary Sun. So what if they decide to start streaming now? It's not like they're breaking the rules. Why should they get warned? Just let them be. The site can't stop all their streams just because I'm here, right? That isn't at all reasonable. So don't be like that and just let them stream if they want to."

The secretary gave a wry smile. "We're afraid that the number of people watching will be lowered as a result. After all, those who are streaming right now are the most popular streamers. They're all professionals and know how to keep their viewers around."

Well, whatever.

You're saying it as though I am not a professional.

Alright then, this bro can only up my game and show you all what I can do!

Chapter 1273: 'Drunk and Alone'!

At Yao Jiancai's house.

Yao Mi was staring at her computer and typing away furiously.

"Mimi, what are you doing?"

"Dad, I'm watching a livestream."

"Who's streaming?"

"It's Uncle Zhang's first stream!"

"Oh? I want to watch it too. This fellow can even stream?"

"Uncle Zhang is currently in danger. He's getting attacked by a lot of streamers at the moment."

"Haha, that's great. That's exactly what I like to see."

"Dad!"

...

Rao Aimin's house.

Rao Aimin was practicing her kung fu when the clicking of a mouse came from the other room.

"Chenchen, have you done your homework?"

"Not yet."

"Hurry up and get it done then."

"I want to finish watching Zhang Ye's stream first."

"He can even stream with his looks? What's there to see?"

...

Dong Shanshan's home.

Hu Feifei, Yu Yingyi, and a few old classmates had gathered here.

"It's about to begin."

"OK, I'm coming."

"Let's see how he'll handle this."

"Does he really know how to stream?"

"Who knows!"

...

It was time!

The livestream began!

Zhang Ye's relatives and friends, his fans, as well as people from all over the country, had gathered to watch his debut livestream. They'd seen too much of Zhang Ye hosting a live television show and listened to him sing too many times on television as well. But for him to stream online? It was a first for everyone. This industry had become extremely hot this year, and a lot of big name celebrities had come to test the waters. Some of them did OK, while others got face-smacked. So they wondered how Zhang Ye would do on his livestream attempt. A lot of people were watching out of curiosity and trying to find out how things would go for him.

In the livestreaming channel.

The image flickered and then lit up.

Zhang Ye was already seated in front of the camera, a smile on his face.

Everyone discovered that Zhang Ye was alone, without a host or any of the site's staff members. This meant that this livestream would not be one of those interview livestreams that promoted the site directly, but a solo stream by Zhang Ye. It was going to be a proper stream.

Zhang Ye's opening was done in a very regular way. Since he was paid by the site, he would have to say whatever was required of him. "Hello everyone, I'm very honored to be invited by Meihe TV

to come and meet everyone in such a way for the first time ever. This is my first time trying out something as interesting as a livestream, so I really don't know how to do this in a professional way. If there's anything that I'm bad at, I hope that you all will be nice about it. If you think that I didn't do too badly, then please come back next time. I'll swing by often, and we can have fun and chitchat about things. It should be rather interesting."

Endless comments scrolled by onscreen.

"—It's really him—Wow, so handsome—Teacher Zhang, hello. Teacher Zhang, goodbye—Time to start sending in the presents—Come on people, come and watch this quickly, the stream has started—This feels a little serious, it seems like Zhang Ye has really never watched or tried out a livestream before, haha—Sing us a song—Don't be so serious, pump it up—The female streamers are giving it their all on their channels. Their necklines are plunging and they're showing so much skin—Really? I'll go and have a look—Old Zhang, do your best—The ladies are already starting to strip. If you don't give it your all, you're gonna lose—"

The number of viewers in the channel was constantly increasing!

500,000!

1 million!

2 million!

It was getting really popular!

XJ86 has sent an airplane.

Xiaoguang77 has sent 999 stalks of roses.

There were some donations sent in, but it wasn't really that much. In real money, it was only about 70 or 80,000 yuan or so.

Ha Qiqi, Little Wang, and the rest of the streaming site's staff were all in another room. When they saw this, they started panicking a little. Based on the statistics, even though Himi, Hooo,

and Sister Yiyi's channels did not have as many viewers, their received donations had shot through the roof. The one with the most donations was Sister Yiyi, with two "whales" sending her donations worth a total value of 500,000 RMB. In just a short half hour, Sister Yiyi's name was already at the top of the donations chart, followed by Hooo, then Himi, who had previously held off Chen Guang. Zhang Ye was only in fourth place.

An A-list celebrity.

Yet he was held in fourth place by a few streamers?

This didn't look too good on him!

Zhang Ye looked at the camera and said with a smile, "Whoa, there are already so many viewers? This is my first time here and I don't know what the standard practices are, so what should we do to kick things off?"

The scrolling comments ran by.

"Sing a song—Right, sing us a song—Sing something for us—"

When Zhang Ye saw that, he said, "Sing a line or two? Sure."

Quite a few of the site's own streamers also came to watch Zhang Ye on his channel. When they heard him say that, they didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Sing? Sure enough, he was resorting to this. These mainstream celebrities who came onto the livestreaming site would either sing, or sing. They were simply too uninteresting. If this were a concert venue or the television station, with the stage and sound equipment they had, one could sing anything and it would sound good. But it wasn't so for a livestream, and this wasn't the kind of place for singing either. What a stream needed was the pumping up of the atmosphere. It needed to be interactive and driven. He was indeed just an amateur as they thought!

Some people were worried.

Some people were gloating.

But what followed utterly dumbfounded the viewers and site staff!

They heard Zhang Ye say with a chuckle, "The atmosphere hasn't warmed up yet. Well then, let me see. Alright, I think this tune should do the trick, let's do it!"

A stirring melody suddenly played!

A lot of people were stunned!

What was this?

A DJ tune?

What are you planning to do?

All of a sudden, Zhang Ye's expression changed. He brought the microphone closer to him and stuck it right up against his mouth. To the music's melody, he said loudly, "Ladies and gentlemen, people come and go. You can walk by or pass by, but you mustn't miss out! If you're rich, shower me with your money. If you aren't, then stay around for the views. Those of you who like what you see, type 666!"

The beat kicked in!

Zhang Ye started singing.

"Solo, I drank myself drunk. (Alone, when I was drunk,) "Seeing double in my bunk. (My life caught up in a funk.) "Our eyes are only for each other. (I see you and me as a couple.) "I just wanna return together. (Inebriated dreams, my vision's tunneled.) "Honey, I caress the zither, (When our eyes meet) "For fun I go to Zizhulin. (All I want is to be together,) "I would walk a thousand miles to beseech the king; I'm just so lovestruck." (But my heart became weathered, swatted down and so much tethered.) Ha Qiqi was dumbfounded!

Fan Wenli was dumbfounded!

Chen Guang was dumbfounded!

The site's staff were dumbfounded!

Everyone who was watching the stream was dumbfounded!

What is this?

Emceeing!

What the fuck!

You even know how to rap?

Zhang Ye was getting more and more into it.

"Speak of you and I grin like a dork, (Your beauty's love before pleasure,) "Playing beautiful sounds. (I want to be with you forever!) "I was young and stupid, cocky and proud, acting like an orc! (I can't imagine us, severed. My heart will follow you, wherever.) "Running from home, I forgot myself, (I'm in love with your face.) "No time to worry about breaking off love. (But I held back when you needed space.) "'Twas a tale told through the ages. (I've searched for you for a thousand miles.) "Just two years of fighting and grey-haired. (Sent you love letters and gifts, by the piles.) "Who'll always fight by your side? (I was cocky, I was making no sense.) "Who's along for the ride and who is tied? (I was too young, my heart was in defense.) "Who do I struggle all my life for? (A memory, I would like to dispense) "I shall love and hate my score!" (To get there, I will spare no expense) The scrolling comments blew up!

"—Damn!—6666666—This is too fucking awesome!—I admit defeat, I totally admit defeat—This is rap—Even a professional streamer wouldn't be able to MC so well—Teacher Zhang can really connect well with the people—So cool—Fuckin' A!—My mom's asking me why I'm kneeling in front of the stream—I thought he'd be singing either a love song or a rock song—Ah, I'm so pumped—How exciting—So great—"

A lot of people had the urge to sing along to the song and dance to it!

The donations also exploded in a flash!

100,000!

200,000!

500,000!

On the donations chart, Zhang Ye was leading the way!

The number of viewers watching the stream also jumped like crazy!

3 million!

3.5 million!

4 million!

5 million!

...

Elsewhere.

In Sister Yiyi's channel.

She was singing and dancing while saying, "So how is it? Do you guys like this dance of mine? Those who like it, please be generous with your donations. Help me maintain first place and don't let me drop down the chart. Eh? Where's everyone gone to?" She suddenly realized that something was wrong and quickly sat back down in front of the computer to have a look. She was now only in second place on the donations chart. Then she glanced at the number of viewers who were watching her stream. It had dropped from 170,000 people to only 20,000. With so few people watching, was there any point in continuing to stream?

What was going on?

What the hell was going on here?

She saw some of the comments.

"Sister Yiyi, I gotta go."

"I need to leave the channel for a bit too."

"Motherfucker, Zhang Ye is rapping!"

"Quickly, go and have a look. I heard his channel has exploded!"

"Let me see what Zhang Ye is up to on his channel first. I'll come back and donate to you after I'm done watching him."

Himi's channel.

Himi was dumbfounded. "Where is everyone? Why did the number of viewers suddenly drop by so much? Where did everyone go? Is there a problem with the network? Then I'll message an admin!"

The viewers left her messages.

"They've all gone to watch Zhang Ye's livestream."

"It's blowing up over there!"

"Zhang Ye has made a big move!"

"Sister Himi, just stop streaming. There's no one left."

There really was no one around anymore!

A channel with over 100,000 viewers was now watched by less than 10,000 viewers!

These popular streamers were going crazy. Rapping? Go fuck yourself! That's what we streamers are good at. What could someone like Zhang Ye know about it? How could it be possible!

Himi stopped streaming!

Hooo, Sister Yiyi, and a few other streamers also stopped streaming!

They headed over to Zhang Ye's channel in a rage to find out what was going on. The moment they went in, they heard that infectious DJ tune!

They heard Zhang Ye's emceeing.

"Like mist, I'm ordinary.

"This life, I have ambition.

"To see your beautiful smile again, I have sworn this oath of tradition.

"I'll bloom among the flowers and vines.

"Looking back, my song ends early.

"I glance back at the sea and play a sad song of the jasmine.

"The general fights outside of the nation, "Who's still here the day I return?

"Brothers talked up the liquid courage weight, "I'm looking for defeat on the battlefield!"

At this moment, it felt as though the entire world had gone quiet!

Hooo was left kneeling!

Himi was left kneeling!

Sister Yiyi was left kneeling!

The streamers from Meihe TV and the other streaming sites who had come to watch were also left kneeling!

Emceeing?

You really fucking know how to emcee?

And they're even lyrics that we've never heard before?

And you're actually rapping much better than us?

Your sister!

Are you the Internet streamer or are we the Internet streamers here?

Aren't you being too fucking professional!

Chapter 1274: Zhang Ye gives a monologue!

On Weibo.

"Quickly go and watch!"

"Zhang Ye is hilarious!"

"That guy is MCing!"

"Those are totally new lyrics, I'm pissing my pants laughing!"

"There were a few popular female streamers who wanted to steal his thunder, but after that rap, those streamers have all stopped streaming. There were no more viewers left in their channels!"

"Are you serious?"

"Damn, I wanna have a look!"

"Here's the URL, come and have a look, quick!"

"Come quickly, there are already several million people in the channel!"

"Haha, why did those female streamers think that they could compete with Zhang Ye with just their abilities!"

"Yeah, that Zhang Ye is well-known for crossing into other industries. Where has he not gone before? I'm not even surprised that he's streaming and even MCed. But if it were other A-listers or the Heavenly Kings and Queens who MCed, I would definitely puke blood. That's because the performance totally does not suit their statuses. Neither would they lower themselves to MC either. But Zhang Ye is different. He has performed 'I Feel So Drained,' 'Nonsense Has Its Nonsense Logic,' and performed comedic crosstalks as well. Ever since his debut, he has been so terrible. It even feels really right that he should be MCing now. This is too funny. Of all those in the entertainment industry, I like how shameless Zhang Ye can get! There's nothing too vulgar or too elegant that he won't do!"

What was emceeing?

It was a form of rapping that was used to host and pump things up. It wasn't exactly music, but could be considered a special form of rapping. Its style consisted of commercial emceeing, bar emceeing, etc.

An A-list celebrity was actually emceeing!

So who wouldn't want to come and watch?

The number of viewers in Zhang Ye's channel kept soaring!

...

Meihe TV.

In Streaming Studio #1.

The music stopped.

Zhang Ye had sung his fill of the song and was very pleased with it. In the past, when he was in his previous world, whenever he watched streamers emceeing with great enthusiasm, Zhang Ye had always wanted to give it a try. But there wasn't an opportunity to do so then, so he never expected to fulfill his dream in this world. Perhaps this was the charm of a livestreaming site, as there weren't too many restrictions or concerns about such things. Anyone could say whatever they liked and sing whatever they wanted. And today, Zhang Ye had brought out a simply amazing song. This was a rap song called "Drunk and Alone." It was a very famous rap song from his previous world, and any streamer could immediately sing a few lines of it whenever it was played. Regardless of its artistic value, it was always fun listening to it.

Zhang Ye said to the camera with a grin, "Well? How was it?"

Countless replies followed.

"That was awesome!"

"66666!"

"We're all kneeling to it!"

"Teacher Zhang, you're so bad. Those female streamers' streams have been totally swept away by you!"

"Hahaha, everyone has come over to this channel."

Zhang Ye picked up a nearby bottle of water and gulped some of it down. He screwed on the cap and put it to the side, then smiled and said, "There are more people watching now, and the atmosphere has warmed up too. This is pretty nice. Let's have fun today and not care so much about the rules. I'm usually not allowed to say too many things on TV shows, but I think it matters less now that we're here. I'll do anything that you guys might like, so we can all have a good laugh and go back to work happy tomorrow. Isn't that what we artists are valued for?"

The comments below:

"Right!"

"Well said!"

"Being happy is more important than anything else!"

"Teacher Zhang, I love you!"

"Zhang Ye, show us some more songs that we've never heard!"

"Right, sing something we don't know!"

The most outstanding feature of an Internet livestream was its interactivity.

Zhang Ye also understood this truth. He laughed and said, "How about something a little different? There's only so many songs that I know, and you've probably heard and seen most of them. So let me think for a little bit." With a pause, he said, "How about this? I'll perform a crosstalk for you all. You've all watched my crosstalks with Old Yao before, and also heard that musical crosstalk from a few days ago. But I don't think anyone has ever seen me give a monologue before, right?"

Everyone was taken back and suddenly became very excited!

"Wow!"

"I've never heard that before!"

"You even know how to monologue?"

"I thought you only knew how to do a crosstalk!"

"Bring it on! Bring it on now!"

"I'm really looking forward to it!"

"Everyone, come quickly. This Zhang fella is going to monologue!"

"Let's donate in encouragement!"

A monologue?

Even Ha Qiqi and the others who were in another room were starting to look forward to this, much less anyone else. They'd never heard Zhang Ye do stand-up before. Because compared to crosstalk, a monologue was much more difficult to perform. And its difficulty wasn't just a matter of being twice or thrice more difficult, but several times harder. There would be someone else supporting you as the fall guy in crosstalk, but you could only depend on your own mouth in stand-up comedy. The format of the dialogue would also have to be much more coherent and complete as a result. In this world's crosstalk scene, of the remaining active crosstalk actors, there were really not too many who could put on a good monologue routine.

It went quiet.

Everyone was listening attentively.

Zhang Ye cleared his throat as his entire aura changed. It felt totally different from when he was emceeing earlier as he said in a calm manner, "Let me tell everyone about something that happened during my childhood. Don't judge me based on what I am now. In actual fact, I was never exactly talented at performing

crosstalk when I was young. Instead, I was rather stupid when I was young. These days, the children's childhoods are much happier than in the past. Before they can even speak a word of Mandarin, they've already been enrolled in English classes."

Ha Qiqi laughed, "Pfft!"

Little Wang laughed loudly. "He's going to insult the English language again!"

The people watching the live stream were also laughing. Just how badly did Teacher Zhang do in English class when he was in school? Was his hatred for it so deep that he had to hurl an insult at it whenever possible?!

Zhang Ye continued, "And they have so many things that they can play with too. What kinds of toys do kids these days not have? They're always carrying around electronics like computers, cell phones, video games, and stun batons—oh, that's not supposed to be played with. When I was young, I had an electric gate at home and my father wouldn't let me touch it."

"Hahahaha!"

"As if he would let you touch it!"

"A stun baton?"

"Pfft!"

Everyone started ridiculing in real time!

Zhang Ye shrugged and said, "Kids these days even own MP8 devices while I had nothing back in my day. I even got called out by my teacher during class. I wasn't listening in class one day when the teacher was teaching and was instead whispering to my friends. Then, our teacher punished me and said, 'Zhang Ye! Stand up! Loudly repeat what you said just now 20 times!'" Zhang Ye sighed and said, "I didn't dare not say it, so I stood and recited, 'There's a veggie stuck in teacher's teeth, there's a veggie stuck in teacher's teeth, there's a veggie stuck in teacher's teeth'—The

teacher turn green with anger and quickly said, 'That's enough, sit down and listen to class.'

"Hahahaha!"

"Aiyo!"

Ha Qiqi held her belly and laughed loudly!

Little Wang couldn't take it anymore either!

Zhang Ye said, "During recess, after we had played every game we could think of, the class monitor organized a friendly competition for us to see who could stick their heads into the classroom desks." Pausing, he said, "I was pretty good at it and managed to stick my head in one." Then, with another pause, he went on, "But I couldn't get it out after that."

"Hahaha!"

"You deserve it!"

Zhang Ye said, "So they called my dad over to send me to the hospital. But the janitor wouldn't let me go. He said that the desk was public property and that I had to get it off before I could go. My dad said if he could get it off me, we wouldn't have to go to the hospital."

"Hahaha!"

"Hahahaha!"

Zhang Ye said, "The doctors these days are really responsible to their patients. When we were young, the doctors would fool us and say that they would need to amputate me from the neck down. My dad said, 'Beheading has been abolished for a long time,' as he pulled me away and ran off. Then we decided to return home. But as I couldn't get onto public transportation, I had to walk home with the desk on my head. 100% of the people who saw me couldn't help but turn their heads, wondering just which branch of the military I belonged to."

"Military?"

"Hahahaha!"

"You should be called the Desk-man!"

Zhang Ye said, "We had a neighbor who was a carpenter and he said that we could saw the desk apart. But my dad thought that maybe it wasn't such a good idea—the school was still holding on to the deposit. He said, 'It's not so bad to bring the desk around. It's much more convenient for him to do his homework this way.' But with my head stuck inside and unable to see anything, how could I do any homework? Finally after three days, I slimmed down and managed to extract myself."

"Pfft!"

"Do you have nothing better to do!"

"I'm cramping up from laughing!"

Zhang Ye said, "Children these days can watch so many meaningful shows, like crosstalk, puppet shows, dramas, musicals...while we all only had a few shows to watch, and they were even presented by the district amateur troupe. I watched 'The Taking of the Wudang Mountains' when I was young. In the scene where Zhao Haifeng was going to execute Chen Gui with his gun, one of his hands was pressed down on Chen Gui, while the other one held the gun. Following a gesture from Haifeng, the props master backstage would bring up the hammer and smash it for the sound effect. Bang! Chen Gui would then play dead. The performance that day was staged in the playground and it happened to rain. The sound effects prop got wet and when Zhao Haifeng did the gesture, the gun didn't 'fire.' We students were all stunned, but the teacher told us, 'Uncle Zhao Haifeng's gun has a silencer on it.'"

"A silencer?"

"Were there silencers in that era?"

"Hahahahaha!"

Some changes had been made to the content.

"The Taking of the Wudang Mountains" was a very famous show in this world.

Zhang Ye said, "But as Chen Gui did not hear the sound effect, he didn't play dead. Zhao Haifeng continued acting and said, 'On behalf of the people'—there was no sound, the prop was still wet. 'On behalf of the people'—still no sound, it was still a wet prop. Zhao Haifeng was panicking by now. 'I'm out of bullets? On behalf of the people, I-I'll strangle you to death!'"

"Strangle?"

"Hahahahaha!"

"How could he strangle him to death!"

"Aiyo, I'm dying of laughter!"

Zhang Ye said, "With this strangling happening, I stood up and said, 'Uncle Zhao Haifeng has such strong hands!'"

"Hahahahaha!"

"Who cares if his hands are strong!"

This comedy made many people stagger in laughter!

The insults and praises kept scrolling past, one after another!

Everyone found this very interesting and refreshing. They had heard many monologues before, but never had they come across this style of comedy Zhang Ye had done today!

Only Zhang knew what it was.

This was called the Qingmen Style of crosstalk.

This routine was an excerpt from Fang Qingping's crosstalk back in Zhang Ye's previous world. It was titled "A Blissful Childhood." Zhang Ye had always liked it a lot and thought that he might as well bring it out today. Actually, there were many other

monologues that he could have done, like Master Ma Sanli's and Master Liu Baorui's performances. But as their works hadn't aged well and contained a greater sense of artistry and story, it wasn't too suitable for the mood. As such, Zhang Ye thought of Fang Qingping's routine after much consideration as he found it to be the most apt for the stream.

After the monologue finished.

It became even rowdier in the channel.

No, it wasn't enough to describe it as just rowdy!

The number of viewers in the channel soared as dozens of whales appeared!

XXX has sent you an airplane!

XXX has sent you 10,000 lollipops!

XXX has sent you 10 aircraft carriers!

The number of viewers exploded!

The donations kept rolling in!

There was laughter all around in the channel!

Chapter 1275: Zhang Ye streams a game!

In the Meihe TV streamer's chat group.

Quite a few streamers had already admitted defeat.

"Zhang Ye is too good at this!"

"Sister Yiyi, are we still going to stream?"

"What's there left to stream for? We can't even compete!"

"Hai, everyone, let's just wash up and go to sleep."

"All of the streams on Meihe are not active since no one's watching!"

"It's not only Meihe TV, just go and have a look at the other streaming sites. How many of them are even streaming anymore? There are no viewers left. They've all come over to watch Zhang Ye!"

"Is this how popular an A-list celebrity really is? There's no competition at all."

"It's not because he's an A-list celebrity, it's because he is Zhang Ye!"

"Yeah, there were also other A-list celebrities who streamed before. Even a man as handsome as Sect Leader Huo couldn't hold it together and take control. He was purely depending on his looks. But Zhang Ye is clearly different in this aspect. He can sing, MC, chat, and even do comedy. He's just too skilled in too many areas and has so many talents to speak of that if he were to just toss any single skill out, it would still be able to impress everyone. So how can we challenge someone like that? Plainly speaking, our abilities are still too lacking. Even combining our forces would not make us a match for him."

...

In the Celebrity Goof Group.

Fan Wenli: "Zhang Ye is amazing!"

Chen Guang: "Hahahaha, I'm laughing like crazy!"

Huo Dongfang: "You guys are watching it too? This monologue is really interesting."

Zhang Xia: "Little Zhang is still that Little Zhang we know."

Ning Lan: "Grandma Zhang, even you're watching?"

Zhang Xia: "Yes, I'm trying to catch up with the times too by watching the livestream."

Xiaodong: "Doing this so effortlessly shows that his skills are real. In our group, there are quite a few people who have taken part in streaming. But which of us has done better than Teacher Zhang has?"

Li Xiaoxian: "Teacher Zhang is the kind of person who can mingle with his fans easily. He knows what the people like during different occasions and is willing to lower himself to do those things for them. Although it's very simple to say this, it's really difficult to carry it out. Just on status alone, who is willing to lower themselves a level the way he does? This is why I've always respected Teacher Zhang a lot."

...

On the livestreaming channel.

The stream was still going.

The chat had blown up long ago. There were a couple hundred comments coming up each second!

"I'm convinced by this monologue!"

"Awesome!"

"That was so funny!"

"In the past, I really didn't know that Zhang Ye had such great skill!"

"Performing stand-up? I have to give it to Zhang Ye!"

"I recorded the stream. Those who want the video can come and look for me later!"

Zhang Ye looked at the chat and said, "If I may put it bluntly, everyone is being too supportive of me. I'm not that great, I'm just trying to get a laugh out of everyone. Let me check the time." He looked at his watch and said, "Whoa, I've streamed for more than 30 minutes already? The organizers asked me to try to keep the stream to no more than one hour, but I guess they must have underestimated me. It wasn't easy to meet all of you over this platform, so how could an hour be enough? Do you guys still want to watch?"

The chat blew up!

"Damn, of course we do!"

"Yes, of course!"

"We have to keep watching!"

"Don't stop, Teacher Zhang!"

"Continue streaming!"

"Fucking do it! For the next two hours!"

"Zhang Ye, are you willing to stream for the next three hours? If you are, I'll send some donations your way!"

Zhang Ye said, "Why would I not be? If you guys really wish to watch and don't mind skipping dinner, I'll broadcast from this afternoon until tonight for everyone, let alone just three hours!"

"Great!"

"Beautiful!"

"Hahahaha!"

"I like this spontaneity of yours!"

"I love how you pull no punches over such things!"

"How conscientious of you!"

"Hehe, the organizers are gonna make a killing this time. Zhang Ye is indeed too conscientious about things. As long as he takes a payment, he'll surely rake in returns two to three times that of his employer. There is really no other celebrity in the entertainment industry who behaves so professionally! In our Beijing dialect, this is called 'fair and just'!"

Zhang Ye took another sip of water to wet his throat. It was pretty fun and refreshing for his first experience in livestreaming. "I've already sung and said enough, so what shall we do next?"

"How about a game?"

"Yeah, stream a game for us!"

"Haha, Old Zhang, are you up for that?"

"Gaming streams are the hottest thing right now!"

Zhang Ye said in amusement, "Streaming a game? Why are you all coming up with such rotten ideas for me, hur hur. I don't usually play games. Plants vs. Zombies? That I still know how to play since it's a game I made. But it's not exactly a game suited for streaming, is it? Are you all really serious about me streaming a game?" Thinking for a bit, he said with a smile, "Then how about this? When we talk about games, the only other game I know is Go. Why don't I stream Go instead?"

Go?

Everyone became excited when they heard that!

"That's good!"

"That'll be great!"

"Teacher Zhang is the world number one in Go!"

"Go it shall be! Stream Go for us!"

"Let Zhang Ye bring us along and soar into the skies!"

"Hahaha, I'm so looking forward to seeing Zhang Ye demolish the other players!"

"There's no point in watching him demolish amateurs, it has to be the destruction of professional Go players!"

"Yes, yes, yes, take on a professional Go player!"

"Pfft, I'm already getting so excited!"

Zhang Ye said helplessly, "You guys really just wanna watch the world burn, huh? So, do you really want me to play it? Well, alright then. Let me log on to my account and switch screens to my computer."

He logged on.

And went onto the Online Go Server.

After some simple controls, the computer's desktop was displayed on the stream. Everyone could clearly see Zhang Ye moving the mouse around, and of course, the webcam had been brought down to a corner of the screen.

The number of viewers soared again!

More and more onlookers had gathered to watch!

Zhang Ye was moving the mouse and slowly looking for an opponent, muttering to himself, "Let me see...it has to be a professional Go player too? Are there going to be any teachers from China Qiyuan who are online at this time? Let me see if there's anyone that I know. Eh, there's someone in this room. It's Li Yi 9-dan. So be it, let's play him."

The comments scrolled by.

"—Hahahaha—Beautiful—Li Yi 9-dan is a GM—Do you guys understand Go?—I can understand it—I don't, but why do we have to understand it to enjoy this? We're just here to watch Zhang Ye demolish someone—Pfft, well said, that's exactly it—Come, let's ride along with Zhang Ye!—"

The few million viewers were grinning at their screens.

Zhang Ye clicked on the room to enter but was met with a password request. "Eh? There's a password? I'm not allowed to enter? Hur hur, I suppose the password is still the same one that they've always been using. This is a common password that the China Qiyuan people always use. It's just to prevent random people from getting in, but all the professional Go players know what it is. This won't be helpful in stopping me, let me give it a try—" He tapped a few keys and entered the password string. "Heh, I'm in."

More messages appeared.

"6666666666!"

"Well done!"

"Haha, beautiful!"

Everyone hooted.

Li Yi 9-dan seemed to have just finished a game and might have been waiting to play someone else. In any case, his status was lit up and active.

Zhang Ye typed: "Let's have a game!"

On the stream, everyone could see Zhang Ye's screen.

Li Yi 9-dan immediately replied: "Go away!"

Zhang Ye snorted. "Why?"

Li Yi 9-dan: "Go find someone else, I'm not playing you."

Zhang Ye: "..."

A dialog box popped up: "You've been kicked by Li Yi."

Zhang Ye did not know whether to laugh or cry.

The people in the channel were laughing like crazy.

"—This is so amusing—Zhang Ye has been ostracized—Beautiful, that was a good kick—Hahahahaha, can it not be this funny?—

Teacher Zhang, your social relations are really poor—This is just delightful to watch—Zhang Ye has humiliatingly been rejected—Pfft, even Li Yi 9-dan is trying to keep his distance from him—"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "I'll look for someone else. I don't believe this is happening." As he said that, he spotted another familiar name. "Tian Weiwei is around, he's the future hope of the Chinese Go world. Let's do it!"

It was another password protected room.

Zhang Ye input the password and entered.

Zhang Ye: "Little Tian, let's have a game!"

Tian Weiwei was stunned. "Lord Zhang?"

Zhang Ye said impatiently: "Gogogo!"

Tian Weiwei suddenly said: "Ah, I suddenly have a stomach ache, I need to go offline."

The dialog box displayed: "You're now the room administrator."

Zhang Ye stared, eyes wide. "What?! Why did he go offline?"

The people in the channel laughed even harder!

"—Ahhahahaha—My tears are falling—Does it have to be this funny?—With Teacher Zhang's reputation, no one dares to play with him —How lonely it is to be invincible—Teacher Zhang, can you do it or not?—This is too funny—"

This was so embarrassing for Zhang Ye!

He sneered and snorted. "I don't believe this. Chat, which of you have an account on the Online Go Server? Lend it to me and I'll go on as an alt!"

"I have one!"

"Use mine!"

"Get lost, use mine instead!"

More than 300 people sent over their account details!

Some were sent over privately, while some posted it directly into the chat. They were totally not bothered that their account details would get stolen by the others, because they couldn't wait any longer to see Zhang Ye posture in a game!

Zhang Ye randomly picked an account and logged in using the details of a rather average ranked account. He again browsed through the list looking for someone to play. Finally, he spotted a familiar name!

Chen Ying 8-dan!

The goddess of the Go world!

A famous professional Go player!

The herd of hungry viewers in the channel got very excited: "—Goddess Chen Ying—My idol—She's the only person I like in the Go world—She's such a fucking beauty—Teacher Zhang, you can do it!—Get her!—Surprise Chen Ying 8-dan!—Hahahaha—"

Zhang Ye entered the password and went into the room.

Chen Ying had clearly just logged on and hadn't even warmed her seat yet.

From her side, Chen Ying typed: "Who is this?"

Zhang Ye showily typed out: "I would like to seek a practice game from Teacher Chen."

Chen Ying: "Only a professional Go player would know the password to this room. I've never seen your name before, are you new?"

Zhang Ye replied: "Yes, yes I am."

"Well, alright then, let's have a game."

"Please guide me."

"Shall I give you a 2-stone handicap?"

"No, there's no need. Let's play a trial game first."

"OK, I can check on your skill level at the same time that way."

The scrolling comments erupted.

"—What a showoff!—Teacher Zhang is so amusing—Hahahaha, he's a fucking scammer—Handicap? This will be a tragedy for Chen Ying 8-dan—Hurry up and start the game already!— I can't wait anymore—I'll give him a perfect score for bluffing so well!—"

The match began!

Zhang Ye went second with the white stones.

Chen Ying placed the first stone on the board.

Zhang Ye made his move in response, speaking to the camera as he played, "Teacher Chen Ying is perhaps the most skilled female professional Go player in our country, or even in the entire world. She is also the strongest female player in the game, so maybe some of you might not be able to understand these few moves that she made, right? Then let me explain it simply. Chen Ying's play style is very steady but not easily predictable at all. Look at this knight's move over here, it was so beautifully played. Most people would probably choose to play in response over here, but that would mean that they fell into the trap and would get dragged back by the opponent. That's why I placed my stone over here. Look, Chen Ying has now been made to consider her next move as she is finding this to be a rather difficult move to play against."

He was streaming.

And commentating.

As well as helping to spread interest in Go.

Zhang Ye was exuding professionalism as a pro gaming streamer!

Other than professionalism, it was still professionalism!

He spoke professionally, and played even more professionally!

When had anyone had the chance to see the number one Go player in the world play and commentate on Go in such a way? For many of the Go enthusiasts watching, it was like they had discovered a treasure trove, and it felt like they had gained a lot of additional knowledge as well!

After a dozen-odd moves!

Chen Ying began slowing down in her play!

But Zhang Ye went faster and faster. "Look here, I played a lethal move against Chen Ying 8-dan, although it isn't exactly fatal. But she is still going to be very troubled by this. If she plays a bump here, I will counter with a stretch. If she makes a stand, then I will play a variation in the corner. It has already been five minutes and Chen Ying 8-dan is still thinking."

Suddenly, his opponent said something.

Chen Ying 8-dan sent three words: "You're Zhang Ye?"

Zhang Ye panicked and said to the camera, "Looks like I got recognized, but do you think that I will admit it? No!"

He immediately replied: "I am not!"

Everyone in the live streaming channel was laughing like crazy!

But Chen Ying sent an enraged emoji. "No? Your sister! It's not even 20 moves since the game has started but I'm already left without a chance of counterattacking right from the beginning. I am playing the black stones and going first, alright? In the entire Go world, who else can achieve something like this other than you?"

Zhang Ye carried on pretending: "Teacher Chen, what are you talking about?"

Chen Ying sent three exclamation marks: "!!! Get lost! It's definitely you!"

A dialog box popped up: "Chen Ying has resigned from the game."

You win."

Chen Ying: "Your standard of play is too high. I have no chance of learning anything by playing against you. I'm leaving now, you can continue scamming the other players in here. Just don't look for me!"

Chen Ying ran off!

Another one had gone!

Everyone in the channel was rolling on the floor laughing!

Chapter 1276: Zhang Ye wreaks havoc on the Korean server!

In the live streaming channel.

A crazy amount of comments scrolled past the screen.

"—You got recognized so quickly!—Hahaha, I nearly fainted from laughter—There's no one left for you to play—Just look at you, there isn't even a person who wants to play you—Even Chen Ying 8-dan has run off too, pfft—Aiyo, this is so amusing and funny—You've already been recognized yet you're still not admitting it. Teacher Zhang, why don't you have the air of a master at all?—Hahahaha—You're really too shameless, but I like that—Aiyo, this is the first time I'm laughing so hard at a gaming stream—Continue doing this, Teacher Zhang—When it comes to shamelessness, I will only take my hat off to you—"

Zhang Ye was also feeling somewhat helpless at this. He looked into the camera and threw his hands in the air. "There's nothing I can do about it if they don't wish to play against me. I probably played too many times against those professional players from the Qiyuan, so they've already gotten used to my playstyle and can recognize me very easily. Hai, what can I do about it?"

The few million viewers started suggesting ideas.

"Go to an overseas server—Yeah, head to the Korean server—That's a great idea—Hahahaha, you guys are too wicked—Lord Zhang, let's use our alts and head over to the Korean server. Your reputation as a Professional Korean Insulter is not for nothing—Yeah, we've never seen you play against a foreign Go player before—Hurry, hurry—I can't wait to see this—Let's flood the Korean server—Gogogo—Attack the Korean server—"

Countless people were commenting furiously!

All of them were clamoring for a game on the Korean server!

And there didn't even seem to be too many voices of objection with almost everyone agreeing emphatically!

Zhang Ye was encouraged by this. "You guys really just want to watch the world burn, eh? The Korean server? Alright, my brothers! Let's go and slay them all!"

...

On Weibo, it suddenly descended into chaos.

"Come and quickly see this!"

"Zhang Ye is playing Go!"

"He's about to head over to the Korean server!"

"Where's everyone at? If you come too late, there won't be anything left to watch!"

"Ah? Really?"

"I'll be right over!"

"Damn, now this I have to watch!"

"What? He's going for such a big play? Well done! I'm coming too!"

"Everyone, please spread the word! This is an event that won't happen for another 10,000 years. If you miss this one, you won't be able to see it ever again. Brothers, hurry!"

"Comedian Zhang is going for the kill!"

...

The number of viewers in the channel was soaring for the umpteenth time!

6 million!

7 million!

8 million!

This didn't only break Meihe TV's viewership record, it also

broke the record of all the live streaming sites in the country. Even the one time a Heavenly King streamed for his first time, he only attracted about 7 or 8 million viewers. Further, from the looks of it, the number of people watching Zhang Ye's stream was still probably going to increase? It could still get higher? This was simply unbelievable! No one could have expected Zhang Ye's first livestream to be so popular!

Even Meihe TV's CEO was feeling a little guilty.

In the CEO's office.

Meihe's CEO was watching the constant increase in viewership numbers. He was wiping his sweat away as he quickly summoned his secretary and said, "Little Qi, go and tell IT to stop boosting the numbers. Don't overdo it. Isn't 5 million viewers a good enough number? Why did they boost it further to 8 million viewers? This statistic is so exaggerated that it might end up becoming a joke in the industry."

That secretary said in surprise, "But boss, IT did not boost up the numbers."

The CEO said in amusement, "Save it, how could there be so many viewers if the numbers weren't faked? Do you think that those Heavenly Kings and A-listers who came over back then really had several million viewers watching them? Bullshit! If the real numbers could account for one-third of the supposed viewers, it would already be very good! All of those statistics were boosted internally!"

The secretary hurriedly said, "Boss, IT really did not do anything. I was there all this while. If you don't believe it, you can go and have a look for yourself. There isn't any time to boost the numbers at all. Everyone is so busy right now trying to keep the servers running. The channel already has over 8 million people watching, do you know how strained our server and network has become?!"

"What?"

"It's real!"

"Those 8 million viewers are all real people?"

"They're all real people!"

"Holy fuck!"

The boss was so shocked that he let out a curse!

...

In the livestreaming channel.

On the Korean server of the Online Go Server.

Zhang Ye wasn't aware of what was going on in the outside world as he was currently leading a horde of people who wanted to watch the world burn. The interface of the Korean server was basically the same as the Chinese server, with the same settings and controls. Except the text was in Korean, but that wasn't much of a difficulty as there were several million people watching the livestream. Even if you wanted to find someone who could understand eight national languages, it wouldn't be difficult at all, much less someone who could understand Korean. There would surely be some kind souls or students studying abroad who were willing to real-time translate for him!

"—Click on that. Yes, yes—That's the professional Go players zone, but your account rank is not high enough, so you can only watch, not enter the match room—Unless a professional Go player invites you to a match or challenges you—That won't work, we're on an alt account, they wouldn't bother with us for sure—Aiya, what do we do then?—I can't wait anymore, hahahaha—Everyone, try to think of something—Or why don't we look for a challenger—Right, let's look for someone to challenge—"

Rank restriction.

Password restriction.

Zhang Ye clicked around for a long time but could not find

anyone to play, with most of the rooms being inaccessible to him.

So Zhang Ye listened to the advice of the viewers and said, "Alright, I'll look for someone to play. Can someone translate 'Are there any professional Go players who dare to exchange a few moves with me?'"

More than a dozen translators immediately typed it out into chat!

The Korean translation of the question he wanted to ask was already here!

Zhang Ye also laughed and said, "Look, just look at this everyone. The pros are all amongst the common folk. There's still a lot of talented people in China. Alright, I'm gonna copy and paste this in!"

He "shouted" into the public chat!

In Korean: "Are there any professional Go players who dare to exchange a few moves with me!"

In Korean: "Are there any professional Go players who dare to exchange a few moves with me!"

He spammed over a dozen of the same message!

However, everyone ignored him!

Quite a lot of the Koreans even laughed at it.

"Who's this?"

"How arrogant!"

"A professional Go player doesn't have time to play you!"

"What an idiot!"

"You're second-rate!"

Of course, these Korean replies were all translated back into Chinese for Zhang Ye. He couldn't be sure whether these viewers had added any of their own words and exaggerated what was being said!

You're second-rate?

Did Koreans speak in such a way?

I've never studied much, so don't try and trick me!

"—Hahahaha—Teacher Zhang is getting looked down upon—Teacher Zhang, how can you bear this? Ah? Even if you can bear it, I can't!—Get them, Lord Zhang—Lord Zhang, don't be afraid—No one wants to play you—Hur hur, no one even knows who you are. Lord Zhang, how can you take this lying down—"

Chat was laughing at and booing him!

Zhang Ye also found it a little embarrassing and couldn't help but feel annoyed.

Ignoring me?

No one wants to challenge me?

I don't believe this!

Zhang Ye immediately found someone to translate another sentence for him and sent it out!

"The XX Sea belongs to China, challenge me if you disagree!"

"The XX Sea belongs to China, challenge me if you disagree!"

In this world, China and many of its neighboring countries also had territorial disputes over the seas and political conflicts. It was also a similar case regarding Korea and both countries had been arguing over such matters for many years.

The people on the Korean server sneered.

"Who is this person!"

"A Chinese?"

"Ignore him, let him shout all he wants."

"Everyone knows that the XX Sea belongs to us!"

"If your fishing boats intrude into our waters, we will definitely

arrest them!"

When some of the Korean professional Go players saw these claims, they just took it in stride and laughed it off. They couldn't be bothered to get into a worthless argument with him as it would be meaningless.

But would Zhang Ye give up just like that?

Still ignoring me?

No one wants to step forward to challenge me?

In the end, Zhang Ye sent out some stunning claims and spammed thirty lines of it!

"Seoul belongs to China, challenge me if you disagree!"

"Seoul belongs to China, challenge me if you disagree!"

"Seoul belongs to China, challenge me if you disagree!"

The several million viewers in the channel erupted into laughter!

There were indeed some controversies between China and Korea!

But Seoul?

That is their capital, brother!

But it proved to be effective!

The Korean server exploded!

"Fuck!"

"Get him!"

"We cannot take this lying down!"

"Motherfucker, get him!"

"Seoul belongs to you? Why don't you claim that Busan is yours too!"

As a result, Zhang Ye spammed another claim: "Busan belongs to us too, challenge me if you disagree!"

The people watching the stream in China were bursting into mad laughter!

"—Aiyo, I can't take this anymore. I really can't take it anymore—Teacher Zhang, why are you such a joker?—There's really no one like you around—This fella really knows how to rile people up—"

The people on the Korean server burst into an uproar and took it up with him!

"Are you provoking us!"

"This is pushing it too far!"

"I'll challenge him!"

"I'll do it!"

"Let me do it!"

Many of the Korean professional Go players also came out of their slumber in rage!

Message:

Li Shinchu has sent you a challenge!

Song Jeonha has sent you a challenge!

Jeong Wonhwan has sent you a challenge!

A total of 200 challenges were received!

Zhang Ye smiled.

Look, they're all here now, aren't they?

He wasn't too familiar with the Korean Go world but had still heard of a few of their names. Like Li Shinchu 8-dan, he was one of the top 30 ranked players in the world of international Go!

It shall be you then!

He clicked and accepted the challenged!

At the next moment, Zhang Ye's account was taken into Li Shinchu's room by the program!

Li Shinchī 8-dan typed with a sneer: "Don't say that I am bullying you! I'll let you have a five-stone handicap! And make you scam from here the way you arrived!"

Someone translated it for Zhang Ye.

The spectators were already ready with their melon seeds and popcorn!

Zhang Ye replied: "Five stones?"

Li Shinchī said: "Yes! I'll give you a five-stone handicap!"

Zhang Ye immediately replied: "Alright, thank you."

The netizens watching the livestream were in stitches!

The scrolling comments galloped past.

"—Shameless! I've never seen someone as shameless as Zhang Ye—Five-stone handicap? Do you mean that you're giving your opponent that handicap instead?—Aiyo, Teacher Zhang, that's really enough. I'm dying laughing—Are you really serious? Where's your flair as the top player in the world?—You're letting Li Shinchī give you a five-stone handicap? Teacher Zhang, can you get any more shameless than this?—Hahahaha—Li Shinchī will be crying soon—If he finds out who he is facing, he'll definitely be in tears—Can't blame him, it's Zhang Ye who is too mean—That's right, this fellow really knows how to seize an opportunity to mess with others—This is gonna be interesting—"

Chapter 1277: Sweeping the server!

On the Korean server.

The local users were all in a frenzy!

The number of spectators exploded as close to half of those users online entered the room to watch.

"A professional player has issued a challenge!"

"Great, it's Li Shinchí 8-dan!"

"This feels a bit like using a cannon to kill a mosquito, doesn't it?"

"Haha, that's why it will be good. Let the Chinese have a taste of how good we are!"

"How dare he come to the Korean server to provoke us? Who does he think he is!"

"Teacher Li Shinchí is giving him a five-stone handicap?"

"Yes, give him a face-smacking game. Even with a ten-stone handicap, we would win!"

"An amateur like this will be defeated even if they had a 20-stone handicap!"

"Wow, there are so many people in the room? There are even other professional Go players watching?"

"Hehe, that Chinese player should be getting such a fright seeing so many of us!"

"That's possible, he must not have seen such a grand turnout before, haha!"

They all were talking and laughing, waiting to see how the Chinese player would make a fool of himself. But unbeknownst to those on the Korean server, the people on the other side were even more excited than they were. In fact, they were more than 100 times more excited than them!

The match began!

Li Shinchu chose to play a blitz game.

A blitz game's rules were not fixed and would differ slightly in every country, with the different tournaments also taking a different stance on the rules regarding it. The general consensus was 30 seconds per move with 10 moves allowed to take up to a total of 10 minutes of thinking time in the game. It was a battle of decisiveness without much thinking time, so playing such a style would demand a lot of the player's skill. In the Korean Go world, although Li Shinchu was not considered one of the top three players, he was still regarded as one of the top in the game of speed with very few opponents who could match him at a blitz game. In the Chinese Go world, there were also not that many professional Go players who specialized in blitz. Xiang Rong 9-dan was unable to do it, and neither could Li Yi 9-dan.

Zhang Ye smiled.

A blitz game?

That was just what I wanted as well!

The five handicap stones were placed on the board.

Li Shinchu began by placing a stone on the game board.

Zhang Ye followed in response.

Li Shinchu sneered and placed another stone.

Zhang Ye did not even think and just replied, speaking at the camera as he did so, "Some of you might not know, so let me tell you all about it. This person playing me is Li Shinchu, which I believe some viewers have already translated and mentioned in the comments. He is considered one of the top few experts in the Korean Go scene, and from the looks of it, his blitz game is even better. Looking at this move here, although the stone was placed fast, it's position was still very well thought out. It's a good move. But he might not know this: I am also very good at blitz. I don't

believe that anyone has ever seen me play blitz, right? Alright then, let me show it to you all today!"

Everyone in the channel was laughing like crazy.

"—Teacher Zhang, can you stop bragging already?—Hahahaha—Your opponent has already given you a five-stone handicap, what are you still bragging about?—Finish him!—Go Lord Zhang!—Stop bragging already, quickly end him—I want to see the Zombie Flow—I want to see the Cosmic Style—"

The atmosphere had reached a fever pitch!

Looking at Li Shinchichi's name, their eyes were all showing a sympathetic glow! Who was Zhang Ye? He was the number one of the international Go world who no one had beat in a normal match. Giving him a handicap? And it was even a handicap of five stones? What kind of an outcome would that lead to in the end? They would find out soon enough!

That outcome would be: Li Shinchichi getting utterly demolished!

That's right!

Utterly demolished!

In a short span of just 20 moves, Zhang Ye's opponent had been routed!

Li Shinchichi was dumbfounded!

The users on the Korean server were dumbfounded!

Even when Li Shinchichi resigned and admitted defeat, he still couldn't come to grips with it and felt like he had been dealt a heavy blow. How was this possible! Who was this person! Even if he had allowed him a five-stone handicap, it was impossible that anyone could beat him in such a relaxed fashion! Then he realized in surprise and nearly vomited a mouthful of blood—his opponent was also a professional Go player!

The Korean server's people returned to their senses and started

cursing and swearing.

"Despicable!"

"Despicable rat!"

"As a fellow professional Go player, how can you accept Li Shinchu 8-dan's five-stone handicap offer?"

"Ptui, you're so shameless!"

"This person is indeed too despicable!"

"How wicked of him!"

Li Shinchu typed angrily: "Again!":

Zhang Ye replied: "Are you still giving me a five-stone handicap?"

You still want a handicap of five stones?

Are you starting to enjoy demolishing me?

Li Shinchu nearly fainted. "Handicap, my ass! Why don't you go die instead!?"

Zhang Ye said regretfully: "Well, alright. If you don't want to, just say so."

The second game began.

It was still a blitz game, but without any handicap.

The Korean server's people were cheering in support: "You can do it, Teacher Li Shinchu!"

"Strip him of his skills, destroy him!"

"Blitz has always been your specialty!"

"Yeah, even if it's China's Xiang Rong 9-dan playing, there's nothing to be afraid of!"

"That's right, even the top Go players like Xiang Rong 9-dan and Li Yi 9-dan are not a match for you when it comes to a game of speed!"

"This person is really such an annoyance. Teacher Li Shinchí, we're depending on you!"

One move...

Five moves...

Ten moves...

Li Shinchí was getting more and more frightened by the developments!

The voices of support in the room were also becoming meeker and meeker!

In the end, when the killing blow was dealt, Li Shinchí got slaughtered before his very own eyes!

He was stunned!

The Korean server's people were stunned!

The spectating professional Go players were also stunned!

Li Shinchí's face turned green with anger as he resigned and admitted defeat!

Just who are you?

Who the fuck are you!

At this moment, Song Jeonha spoke up. "Hmph, let me handle him!"

Zhang Ye accepted the challenge and said to the live stream at the same time, "This person is Song Jeonha, a 9-dan in Go. He's a top professional Go player in Korea and was a previous champion at the International Go tournament! He's an evergreen player in the Korean Go scene and his playstyle is extremely steadfast. Come on then, let me have a taste of your skill!"

Song Jeonha did not talk and simply placed his stone.

Zhang Ye followed.

They played in turn for several moves.

Zhang Ye said into the camera with a smile, "Everyone, have a look at this move. It's very interesting because the opponent is actually trying to lay a trap for me. He is hoping that I will play over here. Why is that? Have a look over here, and here." He moused over the positions. "Do you guys understand now? This is a very well-hidden trap. How do you think I will handle this? Hehe, I am actually got to fall for it on purpose. I'm going in!"

"—Pfft—You jokester, stop playing around—Go ahead—Aiyo, it's so freaking interesting to watch Zhang Ye play Go—This fellow not only plays cunning moves, his tongue is acerbic as well—Lord Zhang, can you play properly or not?—Motherfucker, don't you end up throwing the game away—"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "How could I possibly lose? Hai, he has placed his stone already. Haha, looks like he thinks that I have fallen for his trap. He's already planning his next move. Very good, then I'm gonna make a stand here. Is he going to go this way? Good, I'll follow. Hur hur, see this, he'll realize very soon that the person who has fallen into the trap is actually himself."

After several moves.

His opponent suddenly stopped. There was no response from him!

Zhang Ye chuckled and said, "It seems like he has realized it!"

The people on the Korean server were looking at one another.

"What's the matter?"

"Why isn't there any response?"

Then, Song Jeonha suddenly typed over: "Who the heck are you, really?"

Zhang Ye smiled and replied: "Guess."

Song Jeonha resigned.

A dialog box popped up: You have won!

Following that, another few professional Go players came forward!

"Let me take him on!"

"I'll handle him!"

"Old Song, take a break and leave him to me!"

There were 8-and 9-dan players who were all the top professionals of Korea!

One game!

Three games!

Five games!

After Zhang Ye scored an astounding victory in five straight games, the Korean server finally went silent. The reason for their silence was because they finally realized who they were playing against! If they still didn't know his identity by now, then they would really be idiots!

It was Zhang Ye!

It was that madman who had utterly destroyed PeterGo back then!

Immediately, the Korean server's people started cursing!

"Holy fuck!"

"Why did this fellow come over to the Korean server?"

"Who can possibly win against him!"

"Damn, ignore him so that he'll leave!"

"But he's still shouting! He's saying that Seoul belongs to him!"

"This damned hooligan!"

"Let him continue shouting. We just have to ignore him!"

"Why are we ignoring this?"

"Because we can't fucking win, that's why!"

Zhang Ye went over to Li Shinchu's room. "Let's have another game."

Li Shinchu was almost in tears. "Go away!"

Zhang Ye said: "I'm really not Zhang Ye, let's play again."

Li Shinchu nearly vomited blood: "If you're not going away, I will!"

System notification: Li Shinchu has gone offline.

Zhang Ye: "..."

He went over to Song Jeonha's room again. "Another game."

The other party was so stunned that he could not even say a word.

System notification: Song Jeonha has gone offline.

Zhang Ye: "..."

A flurry of scrolling comments flew by in the livestreaming channel: "—Pfft, hahaha—It's over, no one wants to play with us anymore—I got such a kick out of this—All hail the mighty Lord Zhang—Teacher Zhang is too domineering—This is so much fun. Teacher Zhang, stay around and don't stop streaming, please—Yeah, we still want to continue watching—That was too funny—The level of our Chinese Go has always been very strong, but it's the first time anyone has swept the Korean server like that. I finally got to witness it today—But it's over, we can't have fun over there anymore—Zhang Ye has been recognized and no one wants to play against him—"

...

A few minutes later.

On the Online Go Server.

The Japanese server was flooded with messages!

"Tokyo belongs to China, challenge me if you disagree!"

"Tokyo belongs to China, challenge me if you disagree!"

"Tokyo belongs to China, challenge me if you disagree!"

The Japanese server was enraged!

"Bastard!"

"Who dares act so atrociously like that?"

"I'll fight you!"

"I'll give you a ten-stone handicap!"

"Play me, or you're a cowardly bastard!"

Two hours later.

The Japanese server went silent!

...

The American server.

"New York belongs to Japan, challenge me if you disagree!"

"New York belongs to Japan, challenge me if you disagree!"

"New York belongs to Japan, challenge me if you disagree!"

The Americans swarmed up at once!

"Fuck!"

"Bitch!"

"Those goddamned Japanese!"

"Let's teach them a lesson!"

The users from the Japanese server who knew what was going on nearly spat out a mouthful of blood when they saw this. What the fuck has this got to do with us, Zhang Ye! You are too fucking wicked! Damn you!

An hour and a half later.

The American server went silent!

...

There was no one left to play against!

The entire world's Go servers already knew who was behind this user account!

Zhang Ye was still spamming messages over there. "Where is everyone? Where'd everyone go to?"

The people on the Korean, Japanese, and American servers were all so depressed that they could just die!

Seoul is yours!

Tokyo is yours!

New York is yours!

The entire world is all yours, will that do?!

The entire universe belongs to you, alright!

Get lost!

Hurry up and get lost!

In Zhang Ye's channel:

"—Aiyo, my God!—I laughed til I cried—I've already cried five times from laughing too much—Teacher Zhang, I really have to give it to you—Hahahahahaha—Slay them all! My large saber is again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again unable to endure the thirst!—There's no one left to slay anymore—The Korean, Japanese, and American servers have all been swept aside—How thrilling that was—This will surely be a new chapter in the history of the Go world—Aiyo, I can't take it anymore, I'm laughing again—Zhang Ye is really too good at attracting hate—This fellow was born with the innate ability to mock people—Teacher Zhang, don't you

intend to go international in the future? Is it good to be doing this? Hahahaha—"

At the same time, the entire world's Go enthusiasts were all feeling both respect and hatred for Zhang Ye!

They respected his strength in the game as he was able to sweep everyone aside and emerge victorious. He was definitely the number one person of the international Go world, or perhaps even in the entire history of Go! But the problem was that his character was simply too detestable. He was totally immoral to no end, with no one coming close either 500 years before or after this present moment!

Chapter 1278: 'The Great Truth' finale!

At night.

China Qiyuan.

A group of professional Go players had gathered here, with some of them rushing over to rubberneck after hearing about what had happened. They were all either extremely stunned, puking blood, or unable to close their mouths from laughing too much.

Hu Liang asked, "Has it ended?"

Xu Han said with a chuckle, "They've already finished playing."

The Qiyuan president said, "No one's bothered with him anymore."

"Why is this fellow so free today? He even came to look for me to play a game this afternoon. How could I want to play against him? In the end, I kicked him out from the room." Li Yi 9-dan harrumphed.

Tian Weiwei wiped away his sweat. "Lord Zhang also approached me to play a game this afternoon."

Chen Ying 8-dan said in amusement, "He found me too, I think he was streaming."

"Streaming? Then wouldn't he have embarrassed us thoroughly on a global level?" Li Yi was feeling rather speechless.

Hu Liang disagreed. "He didn't bring us any shame at all. Clearly, he has displayed the might of our nation!"

Xu Han said with a smile, "Yes. In the world of Go, everything is still dependent on strength."

The president suddenly said, "I find it to be pretty good. With Little Zhang's brouhaha, I'm certain that it will get more people interested in Go. This is good for the entire field."

Chen Ying 8-dan said helplessly, "Zhang Ye is invincible right now, with no one able to match him at all. It'd be very difficult for the international Go world to find anyone who could possibly best him."

He swept the American server!

He swept the Japanese server!

He swept the Korean server!

Where else could they find another godly person like him?

There wasn't one in the past, and there wouldn't be one in the future!

...

In the livestreaming channel.

From out of nowhere, the number of viewers had soared to a terrifying number!

8 million!

9 million!

10 million!

It actually broke past 10 million viewers!

In the past, the record for a livestream's total viewers did not even reach 8 million, let alone 10 million concurrent viewers. This was like a dream!

Meihe TV's staff were so happy they could go crazy!

People from the other livestreaming sites were all dumbfounded!

Why?

Because it was just too terrifying!

Wasn't it just a stream of Go?

How many people in this world even knew about or could play Go?

So how the fuck did it get so many viewers?

Yet it did. There were just so many people who enjoyed watching Zhang Ye posture like this and see him acting all showy. The more they watched, the more they liked it, and the more they couldn't stop watching. It was as though this fellow had a natural charm. At times, some people who were watching would end up wanting to insult him in between their laughter as they found him to be too unconventional. But even after the insults, they still continued to like him so damn much that they couldn't understand why.

Onscreen.

Zhang Ye had logged out from the account. He said with a smile, "Alright, that's enough. It's about time I stopped offending any more people. I suppose the Korean and Japanese servers' people must be hopping mad at me. Everyone, please be tight-lipped about this. I was not the one who played those games today. I won't be taking responsibility for them and be scolded for it. What? You're asking me who played them then? Of course it's the owner of that 'dushd' account!"

The owner of that account nearly spat out a mouthful of blood!

Messages scrolled by.

"—Aiyo, can you please stop joking around—Teacher Zhang, you're so bad that you're oozing with evilness—Hahahaha—How sad that the owner has to bear this responsibility—dushd will become famous. To that bro, whenever you log on to the account in the future, please take caution. I believe that when you get online, the entire world will curse at you in all kinds of languages—It's a good time for you to pick up a few more languages then—Pfft, that's enough, guys!—I had such a good laugh today—There's really no other celebrity like Teacher Zhang Ye—I like him so much—The best thing about Zhang Ye is how well he can pretend—Yes, if anyone else has the achievements of Zhang Ye, like being a literary scholar, a mathematician, the number one person in the

Go world, they would probably be conceited to an unimaginable degree. But looking at Zhang Ye, he's still the same as before. He's still like how he was when we first got to know him—Yes, he hasn't changed at all—"

Looking at the time.

It was already 8:30 in the evening!

Zhang Ye was surprised. "Aiyo, how did time pass so quickly? Why didn't any of you remind me? The site only wanted me to stream for two hours, but I've already gone on for over six hours. I started at 2 PM and it's now 8:30 PM? I haven't even eaten yet! You people are really mistreating me!"

A flurry of insults scrolled past.

"—Go to hell—You're the one who's mistreating us—Hahaha, you're the one who didn't fucking keep track of time, so how dare you blame us for it?—It was you who didn't go offline yourself—I haven't had dinner yet either—So you've also realized that it's already past 8?—Pfft, and I thought you were gonna stream until dawn—That wasn't enough, give us more—Yeah, Teacher Zhang, it's this late, so what would a few more minutes matter?—Show us something else that we haven't seen before—Agreed—+1—Give us a finale—You can go and eat after you're done with one last one—"

Zhang Ye was at his wits' end. "Another one? Something that you guys haven't seen before? I've already performed a crosstalk, MCed, and played Go, what else have you guys not seen me do? I suppose you've seen it all already." Thinking for a bit, he said, "Why don't I sing you a folk song for y'all?"

A folk song?

You even know how to sing a folk song?

The channel's viewers got all excited!

"—Come on then—Hurry up—Alright, a folk song it shall be—Let's hear how it sounds—Quickly sing it—Is it going to be an opera

song or what?—"

There were no clappers 1 .

There were no stringed instruments.

Zhang Ye stood up with his full body in frame and opened his mouth to start singing.

"About relations?

"The Heavens are not kin.

"It has the Sun, Moon, and stars.

"The cycle of the Sun and Moon ages people.

"Taking countless people from this world.

"About relations?

"The Earth is not kin.

"The land is full of living beings as precious as gold.

"Fighting for fame and fortune through the years.

"Visiting old graves after the new."

Listening to this, many of Zhang Ye's friends sighed.

Yao Jiancai fell silent.

Ha Qiqi looked at Zhang Ye.

Hearing this tune, they just couldn't smile no matter what. All they felt was a heavy, sinking feeling in their hearts.

Zhang Ye sang.

"About relations?

"Are my peers the closest?"

The people in the channel cheered!

Yi!

Yi!

Yi!

Hahaha!

Zhang Ye sighed and sang.

"No, they aren't either.

"Infighting and plots, chill the heart!"

Suddenly, he raised his voice.

Zhang Ye looked at the camera and sang.

"About relations?

"The audience is the closest!

"The audience and actors are linked by their hearts!"

The scrolling comments were all praise!

"—Good!—Good!—Well said!—"

Zhang Ye was very into it.

"As the old saying goes!

"Without the patron, no artist would arise!

"Braved the cold winds and snow yesterday to get to the dry north!

"Traveling to Jiangnan today for the scenery!

"I offer a word of advice.

"Stay away from wine, women, and song!

"And don't indulge in eating, drinking, orgies, or gambling!

"I cup my fist and pay respects to all: Everyone, may fortune shine upon you and your business thrive!"

Zhang Ye gave a fist and palm salute and faced the camera with a mix of emotions. He had long wanted to sing the words of this folk song and had done so today because it was also a timely reminder to himself. It was just the correct day. And the correct place.

Everything else was bullshit. Only the audience was the most sincere. Only those without any motives and truly liked him were the most sincere of people. Zhang Ye wanted to tell himself that this was true no matter how far he went, and that he mustn't forget this all his life.

"—Great—That was very well sung—Zhang Ye, you're really awesome—Teacher Zhang, I like you a lot—Thank you—Teacher Zhang, it's been hard on you—"

A folk song called "The Great Truth" from his previous world's Deyun Society 2 had moved plenty of people here!

Today's stream made many viewers revel in joy. They were thoroughly satisfied through the pores of their skin to every cell in their bodies. It was such a joy to watch!

The opening was good!

The process was good!

The closing was also good!

There was nothing to complain about!

This was the first time a celebrity from the entertainment industry had succeeded in testing the waters of online streaming!

Chapter 1279: Zhang Ye is going for the S-list?

After the stream ended.

Zhang Ye could finally take a breather. He hurriedly downed a bottle of water and got up to walk out of the livestreaming studio. When he came outside, he was slightly stunned as he found more than a dozen people waiting for him.

"Great job, Director Zhang!"

"Great work, Teacher Zhang!"

"You're amazing!"

"This stream was great!"

"The number of viewers exploded!"

"This is a record!"

"The records for the value of the donations received and the number of viewers have both been broken!"

A group of Meihe TV's staff were chattering.

Even the CEO of Meihe TV came over to join them. The moment he came up to them, he said excitedly, "Teacher Zhang, great job, great job. Thank you so much. In these two years, we have worked with many celebrities in show business. But there has really been no one as professional as you were today. Don't mention the celebrities, even our own site's full-time streamers could only stream for about two to three hours at a go. If they were asked to stream for close to seven hours? They wouldn't be able to take it for sure! There's nothing I can tell you!" He gave Zhang Ye a thumbs up. "Except for this!"

Zhang Ye smiled and waved it off. "Since I'm paid for it, it's only to be expected of me. It's nothing too serious. I don't have much to

offer except for my energy. If we're making a living out of this, the least we can do is make sure the audience is not short-changed, right? I'm just earning a living, it's nothing that noble."

Meihe TV's CEO said, "But it's not like that. Which other celebrity would possibly stream six to seven hours for us? It just wouldn't happen. If we paid them for two hours, they would even charge you extra if it went two minutes over. It's just how things work in the entertainment industry these days. There aren't any people like you anymore. Teacher Zhang, we're really happy to be working with you on this occasion. I won't say anything more and will remember this. If there's anything you need in the future, just tell me."

Zhang Ye nodded. "Well, there's something that I need right now."

The CEO immediately answered, "Go ahead."

Zhang Ye touched his belly and said, "Isn't it about time for dinner?"

Dinner?

Pfft!

That's right, nobody has eaten yet!

The CEO facepalmed and exclaimed, "Aiyo, just look at how forgetful I am. Quick, quick, let's reserve a table and call a taxi. I'll personally hold a banquet to show our appreciation for Teacher Zhang and his team!"

"You don't have to go to all that trouble." Zhang Ye was really hungry. "Do you have any packaged food?"

A staff member nodded and said, "We do, but it's just some boxed lunches that we had earlier."

Zhang Ye pointed at him. "That'll do."

A female staff member said nervously, "But it's already cold."

"Just heat it up in the microwave," Zhang Ye said.

Two minutes later.

A group of people watched as Zhang Ye bent over on the table and gobbled up the boxed lunches with a pair of chopsticks. They exchanged glances when they saw such a sight.

The boss gave a wry smile. "You're fine with just eating boxed lunches?"

Zhang Ye raised his head and said with a smile, "Why not?"

He was never picky about food.

He could have delicacies.

Or he could have instant noodles.

The Meihe staff all looked at him and suddenly seemed like they understood a little more about why Zhang Ye could reach his level of fame. Just a simple action was enough to explain a lot of things.

...

The next day.

There were headlines of Zhang Ye on quite a few entertainment news sections!

"Zhang Ye teams up with Meihe TV for his first ever stream!"

"10 million viewers watching concurrently!"

"Zhang Ye's shocking level of appeal!"

"An A-list celebrity who raps!"

"'Drunk and Alone' gets mimicked by Internet streamers!"

"Zhang Ye's new monologue amazes the industry!"

"Zhang Ye wreaked havoc in the Go world last evening!"

"The Japanese, Korean, and American Go servers have been swept aside by Zhang Ye!"

"The Chinese Go world to welcome a hundred years of prosperity?"

"'The Great Truth' moves many livestream viewers to tears!"

Online, there were similar voices!

"Did you guys watch it yesterday?"

"Of course I did, it was so enjoyable!"

"I died laughing. I've never seen such a funny celebrity before!"

"Hahahaha. I became a braindead fan of Zhang Ye's after yesterday!"

"Zhang Ye has definitely got to be part of that handful of truly talented celebrities in all of showbiz. He just has too many good ideas in him!"

"Yeah, I really have to take my hat off to him!"

"He totally slayed the Japanese and Korean servers. It really got my blood pumping just watching!"

"I'll give him a perfect score for this round! It was awesome!"

"Zhang Ye's popularity is gonna surge again."

"Yesterday's Zhang Ye was indeed domineering!"

"Could he not be domineering? Even during the stream fronted by the Heavenly King, there were at most 7 million viewers online, assuming the organizers did not boost the numbers. But watching Zhang Ye's stream, I could clearly feel that the 10 million viewers were all real people. Judging from the atmosphere in the channel and looking at Weibo's trending topics at that time, there's no point in arguing whether the stream was really that popular or not. Could this fellow's appeal put him on par with the Heavenly Kings and Queens?"

"Surely not, right? His popularity is still too far behind theirs."

"Oh right, I haven't checked Zhang Ye's popularity score in a long

time."

"He's still at number one in the A-list, no changes yet. When he got promoted to the top of the A-list, his popularity score was still lacking by severalfold to get to the S-list, so how could he get there so soon—eh—wait!"

"Holy shit! Quick, take a look!"

"This...what is this?"

"My titanium dog eyes are blinded!"

"Someone, come quick! Something big has happened! Something big has happened!"

"Ahhhhh!"

"But this is impossible!"

"How could this have happened?"

All of a sudden, quite a few netizens were alarmed. Someone finally realized that something was wrong. Someone finally discovered that something was wrong with Zhang Ye's popularity!

Back when Zhang Ye reached the top of the A-list, it looked like he was just a step away from reaching the S-list. But this step was actually very far away and was almost considered an insurmountable gap. In recent years, so many celebrity and big shots had reached this top position that Zhang Ye was in but were still unable to take a seat among those on the S-list. In the end, it was still those seven familiar faces who stood atop the entertainment circle, unmovable by any storm. As such, no one thought a thing about it when Zhang Ye rose up to the top of the A-list!

But today!

At this moment!

They were suddenly stunned to find out that not only had Zhang Ye's popularity score caught up to those ahead of him, it had even

gotten within touching distance to the popularity scores of those seven S-list Heavenly Kings and Queens!

The media was stunned!

The public was stunned!

The entertainment circle was stunned!

The teams of the Heavenly Kings and Queens were stunned!

God!

How was that possible!

When did he catch up to them?

Wasn't this too soon!

Fortress Besieged?

The highest literary award?

Advertisement endorsements?

I Am a Singer?

Plaza dancing?

Or this livestream?

No, this was definitely not something that could be achieved with just a couple good outcomes. This was an accumulation of everything, and Zhang Ye had been undertaking this task for the past several months. All of it was done in order for him to have a shot at the S-list! So this was the objective of Zhang Ye's intense schedule and endorsements in all of these months! They were too foolish, too stupid. They should have thought of this long ago; they should have realized it long ago. How did they only just find out about it!

Would Zhang Ye succeed?

Was one of those seven spots going to change owners soon?

Was there going to be a shake-up in the entertainment industry?

This was the first time!

This was the first time that any celebrity had come so close to one of those highly regarded seven people at the top!

Chapter 1280: Turmoil in the industry!

At home.

The outside world was in an uproar.

But Zhang Ye was still sleeping soundly in bed.

The bedroom door was pushed open and his mother came inside looking shocked. "Son! Son! Are you serious? The news is reporting that you're making a push for the S-list?"

Zhang Ye was woken up. "Ah?"

His father also came into the room. "Is it true?"

"Yeah." Zhang Ye sat up from bed. "The media has already reported about it?"

His mother said, "They just reported about it, and the outside world has turned upside down!"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I didn't think that they would find out so soon."

His mother said excitedly, "So are you serious? Why didn't you tell us about it?"

"I told you all about it earlier. I said that I was preparing for a big job, but you insisted that I was going to rob a bank." Zhang Ye rolled his eyes and said, "I've been planning this for a long time. In the past few months, all the work that I did was to support this plan. In truth, it's still not complete yet and I'm still short of a few steps. But if they've already found out about it, I guess there's no other way to it. Hai, I knew that it couldn't be kept under wraps for long. No one is that silly and it looks like I can't sneak up to them anymore, hur hur. Since they've found out, I'll just carry out the plan more openly. I've already gained enough popularity anyway. Even if they make preparations against me, I doubt they can get me off their tails in the short term."

His mother pointed at him. "Son, Mom is optimistic that you can do it!"

But his father said, "Can you really go up?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I'll give it a shot."

His mother said, "Go for it. Show them what my son is capable of!"

"Alright." Zhang Ye shrugged. "After we're done with the wedding, I'll make sure to put up a good fight against those seven people."

His mother said happily, "Your wedding might even be able to add quite a bit of popularity for you. If they knew who your wife is, they'd surely be surprised!"

Surprised?

That wouldn't aptly describe it at all!

Horrificed should be the word!

He wondered how many people would be horrified when they found out!

"Mom," Zhang Ye said calmly, "keep it on the down-low."

Ring ring ring, ring ring ring.

His friends started calling.

The first call was from Ha Qiqi. It sounded very chaotic on her end.

"Director Zhang, we can't keep it under wraps anymore!"

"I know, I've seen the news."

"The media has broken through and called us a dozen times so far!"

"You guys handle it, sorry for all the work."

Followed by Chen Guang.

"Damn, are you really doing it?"

"Doing what, Old Chen?"

"What are you even saying! You've kept it too well-hidden!"

"Haha, but I didn't hide it at all."

"You're so aggressive. Wenli and I just caught the news and were stunned by what we saw. It was only then that we realized that your popularity has grown to such a level. You're really great, aren't ya? This is such a big deal, but you managed to keep such a straight face about it. This is such a huge deal, getting to the summit of show business. The entire industry has blown up over it!"

"What do you mean by getting to the summit? I'm not even close yet."

"You call this not close?"

"Don't listen to the hot air that the media is blowing. I'm still lacking by quite a bit in the popularity score."

"So all the more you should be putting in more hard work to give yourself a boost."

Yao Jiancai also called.

"You're aiming for the top?"

"Can't I?"

"Of course you can, you totally can!"

"Haha, I'll give it a shot and see how it goes."

"You won't have a problem doing it. I purposely went to check out the rankings just now. Although there's still a little more to go, it's not really that far anymore. This is definitely the closest anyone has gotten in recent years to those seven people. Keep working at it and make it happen. You'll be really great in the future when you get to the top domestically!"

"I'll see what I can do."

Zhang Xia.

Xiaodong.

Amy.

Ning Lan.

Zhang Ye's cell phone was exploding with calls!

The media also nearly caused a stampede over at Zhang Ye's Studio!

The media and industry could not be blamed for having such a huge reaction. The main issue was that Zhang Ye's issue had come up too suddenly. It was so sudden that no one was prepared for it!

The S-list!

There were only seven spots among those at the top of the entertainment industry!

If someone was coming up? Then that would mean that someone else would be going down. This was the rule of this world's Celebrity Rankings Index. Whether it was the S-list, the A-list, or the B-list, this rule would apply at every level since they couldn't have an unlimited amount of celebrities in them. A celebrity wouldn't simply get promoted the moment they reached a certain popularity score. The rankings index would always take into consideration factors like how the public's attention span was limited, and how the development of the entertainment industry was not stagnant. The difference in popularity scores from ten years ago and now was very different. If they had implemented a fixed system back then, with the crazy development of the entertainment industry by today's terms, there would have been at least several dozen S-list celebrities at present, if not a hundred of them. It couldn't be done this way, so the Celebrity Rankings Index needed to have a fixed quota at each level, not depend on a fixed boundary of popularity scores dictating who would get in. It had

rationale.

Zhang Ye thought about what it was like in his previous world and felt that it was rather similar in a way. Although it wasn't as clear-cut as this world's way of doing it, there were still pretty well-defined S-and A-list celebrities back there. The evaluation criteria were all dependent on the media's, industry's, and one's own judgment and feeling of how popular a celebrity was. Similarly, the number of S-list celebrities in his previous world was also not unlimited. If they really counted them, there would only be a handful. Although the number of S-list big names would gradually increase and looked like there wasn't a cap to it, but if you were to look back on it later, those initial S-list celebrities would definitely have lost quite a bit of their popularity from before, and might even end up dropping from the list? Or become has-beens? Or disappear from the public's view? With new people coming in, the old would have to go. In terms of this point, the two worlds were essentially the same.

If you wanted to rise?

Then you'd have to fight for it!

There were only those few spots. Whoever could get one would mean that they were the more capable people!

And the current Zhang Ye had undoubtedly declared war on those seven people!

The media was stirring with activity!

"Zhang Ye Declares War!"

"Can Zhang Ye reach the top?"

"The battle for the S-list officially kicks off!"

"Great changes are coming to the entertainment circle!"

"Industry experts are not optimistic of Zhang Ye's chances to get into the S-list!"

"Will the teams of the Heavenly Kings and Queens call for an urgent response?"

"The biggest thing to happen in the entertainment industry this year!"

There was also an uproar on Weibo!

"I nearly vomited blood from the shock!"

"This is so impressive!"

"In just the blink of an eye, Zhang Ye has come to this step?"

"Yeah! To think that I was just listening to Zhang Ye's radio broadcast of Ghost Blows Out the Light not too long ago. At that time, I started liking him quite a bit. After following and scolding him so much over the years, damn, this jokester has actually reached a point where he has a chance of getting to the top of the entertainment circle when no one was expecting it? Hai!"

"Hahaha. Fighting and scolding his way up to here over three years, this fellow has gone through really big changes in the entertainment circle. It's wonderful."

"Supporting Zhang Ye reaching the top!"

"Go Teacher Zhang!"

"I don't think anything will come out of this. In the end, it will have all been for naught."

"Yeah, no one's been able to touch those seven people's positions in so many years."

"Let's take it one step at a time and see how it turns out!"

"If those Heavenly Kings and Queens are willing to come out to garner some popularity, they'll easily pull away from Zhang Ye. It really won't be easy."

"But he has a very good chance too!"

"Supporting Zhang Ye!"

The netizens were arguing!

There was a heated discussion going on in the industry!

The entire country was talking about this news!

At this moment, Zhang Ye received a call from Zhang Yuanqi.

Looking at the caller ID, Zhang Ye smiled and picked up. "Hello, Old Zhang."

Zhang Yuanqi said: "Are you really coming up?"

Zhang Ye acknowledged: "Yeah, I have to find something for you all to do."

"How confident you sound!"

"Haha, do you have any suggestions?"

"No, but I do have advice for you."

"Oh?"

"Of the seven of us, none of us are pushovers. If you really want to bring one of us down, it definitely won't be as easy as you think."

"You're saying it as though I'm a pushover."

"True, then all the best to you."

After hanging up, Zhang Ye stopped thinking about this issue.

About an hour later, Zhang Ye received a message. It was sent by Zhang Yuanqi's manager, Fang Weihong. When he saw it, he was slightly taken aback. It contained the recent schedules of the six S-list celebrities other than Zhang Yuanqi. There was the screening dates of their movies, as well as a forecast of where they could increase their popularity score. All of the information was detailed very clearly. There were even the actions taken by their teams after finding out about Zhang Ye's intention to make a bid for the S-list, like the increase in their activities, consideration of variety shows' invitations to them, etc.

This was clearly insider's news!

Then a call from Fang Weihong arrived.

Zhang Ye hurriedly picked it up. "Sister Fang."

Fang Weihong laughed and said: "Did you see it yet?"

Zhang Ye said: "I saw it, thank you."

But Fang Weihong said, "Don't thank me, it was Sister Zhang who got me to collate the information and send it to you. Your social ties in the industry are terrible, and everything you do is always an uphill battle. You don't really get along with the higher-ups of the entertainment industry either, so your information must naturally be very limited. This is a critical moment in your bid to get into the S-list, so see if that will be of any help to you. In the future, if you need this sort of news again, you can ask me."

Zhang Ye was stunned. "Sister Zhang wanted me to have it?"

"Yes."

"We were just talking on the phone and she didn't seem like she was optimistic about my chances."

Fang Weihong was taken aback. "She's not optimistic of your chances? Did she say that?"

"No, but it sounded that way," Zhang Ye said.

Fang Weihong shook her head and said: "Well, for me, I once asked Sister Zhang about this. It was about a year ago when I asked her how long she thought the seven people of the S-list could hold on to their spots. Would it be a year? Three years? Or five years? Sister Zhang told me at that time that there wasn't much of a chance for there to be any changes to the S-list in the short term. So I asked her again, what if changes really happened. Who would be the one to go down? And who would rise up? Guess what she said?"

Zhang Ye listened.

Fang Weihong laughed and said: "Sister Zhang said that if changes really happened, she wasn't sure about who would be going down, but she was sure that the person to come up would definitely be—you!"

Zhang Ye was stunned. "Me?"

He really hadn't expected this.

Was Old Zhang's opinion of him so high?

After hanging up, Zhang Ye stared at the information on his cell phone that Fang Weihong had sent to him. He felt rather touched, but moved his hand to it and deleted the message. He would remember this for sure. Whoever was good to him, he knew full well. But he didn't need this information. Neither was he the type who would want to make use of his opponent's information and study them. Most times, Zhang Ye preferred to be more direct about things, rather than beat around the bush.

Wherever they were going?

Whatever they were doing?

However they would garner more popularity?

Who cares about all of that!

I will just be relentless!

Life and death are destined. Everyone pits their skill!

Chapter 1281: Zhang Ye designs the wedding dress!

It was the weekend.

In the morning.

While the outside world was still digesting the news of Zhang Ye's bid for the S-list, the official Weibo of Zhang Ye's Studio issued some alarming news: Teacher Zhang Ye will temporarily be putting all his work on hold from today in order to prepare for his upcoming wedding. He gives thanks to everyone and the media for their concern. All news and schedules regarding the wedding will be announced at the earliest possible opportunity.

When the post went up on Weibo, it became even more lively on the Internet!

"Wow!"

"The wedding?"

"Zhang Ye is really going to get married soon!"

"It's too soon, I'm still not prepared!"

"Congratulations, Teacher Zhang!"

"So who's the bride?"

"Yeah, can we have a picture of the bride please!"

"How nerve-wracking. The wedding will be held soon and no one even knows who the bride is? Aren't you leaving us with sleepless nights this way? My gossiping heart can't take this anymoreeeee!"

"Yeah, that's true. It's too mysterious!"

"I'm just curious how there isn't any information about it at all!"

"There aren't even any rumors or a hint of who it might be!"

"Where have the paparazzi been? What have the reporters been

working on?"

"Hmph, you guys always seem to know every single bit of gossip, like whoever has a mistress, or whoever has an illegitimate child, none of that ever gets unreported! But why are you all fucking up at this critical moment? Why is there just no news at all when it comes to Zhang Ye's affairs? Are you any good at your jobs!"

"That is indeed a little weird!"

"I really wanna see who the bride is!"

The media outlets and paparazzi could only take the fall for this.

The media outlets smiled bitterly, while the paparazzi were helpless.

What has this got anything to do with us? Why are you all scolding us?

We would also like to know! But the problem is that there isn't any information about it at all!

Following that, under the strong urging and pleas from the media outlets, the staff of Zhang Ye's Studio relented and agreed to hold a mini-press conference to answer some of their questions.

At the press conference.

Several dozen media outlets were posing questions non-stop.

A reporter asked, "Who is the bride?"

Zhang Ye's Studio replied, "We're keeping it a secret for now."

"Where will the wedding be held?"

"We're keeping it a secret for now and will inform everyone when the time comes."

"Will it be a Chinese style wedding or a western style one?"

"According to our knowledge, it will primarily be a Chinese style wedding."

"Will reporters be allowed into the venue to take photographs?"

"Yes, we will be coming up with a list of invitations for the relevant media outlets to send one of their reporters to attend the wedding."

It was just a mini-press conference, but it lasted for a full two hours.

The media did not let Ha Qiqi and the others leave as they pushed their microphones forward and questioned them for a long time. When the press conference finally finished, everyone dispersed amid the commotion with some of the reporters rushing back to their offices so that they could quickly report about it. There were also some reporters who had already finished their drafts at the venue and sent it back to their offices for the news to be published immediately.

"Zhang Ye's impending grand wedding!"

"Identity of bride remains mystery!"

"Could it be a celebrity? Or an average person?"

"Heatedly discussed about, Zhang Ye's wedding captures the attention of the public!"

Zhang Ye's wedding was clearly a big deal within the entertainment industry as well. After all, he was no longer the same as before. He wasn't that small-time celebrity that no one cared about. He was now able to hold out against those seven people at the top of show business. Regarding Zhang Ye's big wedding, the whole nation's people had their eyes on this occasion. Everyone knew that this event would again bring about a lot of fame for Zhang Ye. He was now edging closer and closer to one of those seven spots!

...

Later that morning.

Elsewhere.

Zhang Ye received a call and went downstairs.

Wu Zeqing's secretary, Bai Li, had driven to his place. When she saw Zhang Ye, Bai Li hurriedly got out of car. "Teacher Zhang, Chief Wu has been caught up in some work and might only be able to come over later. She had me pick you up first and send you over. Why don't we leave?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Alright."

Bai Li proceeded to open the car door for him.

Zhang Ye quickly said, "I'll get it myself."

Bai Li said politely, "Let me do it."

"Don't be so polite with me, Secretary Bai." Zhang Ye got into the car and said with a chuckle, "We're not strangers anymore."

Bai Li gave a reserved smile. "That won't do. You're Chief Wu's boyfriend, so you're also like my boss."

As they talked, they drove off.

Bai Li was a little distracted as she drove. She could still remember how shocked she was when she heard about this news yesterday. Even now, she still found it quite difficult to believe!

Teacher Zhang?

Chief Wu?

They were going to get married?

Oh my God!

Did they really have to make it this big?!

Bai Li now understood why Chief Wu had been so good towards Zhang Ye in the past. So it was because they were a couple. She had also been catching the news these days. The newspapers were all talking about how a shake-up was coming to the entertainment industry and that Zhang Ye was planning to break into the S-list.

However, only Bai Li knew that that was not even something to break a sweat over. What was that? What kind of a stupid shake-up would that be? When Zhang Ye's wedding day arrives, all of you will realize what an earthquake truly is!

At a bridal shop.

She parked the car. Zhang Ye and Bai Li walked inside.

There were a few people in here.

Fat Sis, Wu Zeqing's elder sister.

Wu Mo, Wu Zeqing's nephew.

Xin Ya, Wu Zeqing's best friend.

Zhang Ye smiled and greeted them, "Fat Sis, Mo'er, Professor Xin."

The mathematician, Xin Ya, smiled and said, "What an important man Professor Zhang is. We were all waiting for you."

Fat Sis did not say anything pointless and simply introduced, "Zhang'er, let me introduce you to some people. These two are our country's best fashion designers. This is Julie, a famous bridal gown designer. This is Li Xianghe, a famous Chinese Kwaï designer. Aren't you planning to use a bridal gown when welcoming the guests, and then change into a Chinese dress for the wedding ceremony? I've already found you two of the best designers and got them to come down here today. They've brought along some samples, so come and take a look. We have to decide on the choices by today. Otherwise, it'll be too late."

Zhang Ye blinked. "It's that urgent?"

Wu Mo rolled his eyes. "Listen to what you're saying. You and my aunt are both busier than the other. We pushed for the trying on of the bridal gown long ago, but you two just kept not turning up!"

Zhang Ye said, "Hey, how can you speak to your uncle like that?"

Wu Mo burst into tears. "Go away! We're talking on our own

terms!"

Zhang Ye shook hands with both the designers and said, "Sorry to trouble the two of you."

Julie smiled and said, "It's nothing."

Li Xianghe smiled. "It's my honor."

Fat Sis glanced around. "Eh? Where's Zeqing?"

Bai Li said, "Chief Wu has something to attend to and can't come over yet."

Fat Sis smacked her lips. "That Zeqing! An important matter like choosing the bridal gown and she's not here? I'll call her!" She had already picked up her phone and started dialing.

"Big Sis?"

"What are you doing?"

"There's something I have to handle at work."

"But we're choosing your bridal gown today!"

"Just let Zhang Ye select it for me."

"He's a man, what would he know about such things? Can you really trust his taste?"

"Of course I trust him. Just let him choose it, I'll wear whatever he selects."

"Whoa, you're really that brave, huh?"

"Hur hur, I have to hang up now."

After hanging up, Fat Sis had no choice but to go ahead with the selection.

The group of them gathered around and started picking the bridal gown.

Julie was a female designer and also a good friend of Fat Sis. She took out five design sketches, one of which was a finished product

that was dressed on a mannequin. "Everyone, come and see this. This is the style that I'm recommending as its design is concise and elegant. Look at the design of the veil, this is made from..." She gave a very detailed description of it.

The first bridal gown:

Zhang Ye shook his head.

Fat Sis shook her head.

The second bridal gown:

Xin Ya firmly said no.

Zhang Ye was also not too enthusiastic about it.

The third and the fourth pieces were also turned down by Zhang Ye.

Fat Sis said, "I think the fourth design is quite nice looking."

Xin Ya also said, "The fourth piece is good."

Wu Mo said, "I prefer the third one."

But Zhang Ye firmly said, "All of them won't do. They don't suit Old Wu."

It was either too simple.

Or too revealing.

Or it involved too many complicated designs.

Zhang Ye did not like any of them.

Julie looked at him. "These styles of dresses are the latest fashion. Teacher Zhang, if you have any requests, you can let me know. I will make the modifications according to your suggestions."

Xin Ya laughed and said, "How would he know anything about that?"

Zhang Ye said in amusement, "As someone who works with

math, do you think you know any better then?"

Xin Ya said, "Whoa, you speak as if you don't work with math yourself?"

Wu Mo laughed and said, "Did you two fight over something? Why do you always bicker?"

Xin Ya harrumphed. "At the entrance of Tsinghua, he robbed us of our students and smashed our cars."

Realization dawned on Wu Mo. "That's right, Sister Xin is from Tsinghua University, who hate Peking University!"

"They were at fault at that time," Zhang Ye rebutted.

Julie recommended a few changes and came up with some more proposals.

Xin Ya, Fat Sis, and the others were all giving suggestions. The final proposed style was somewhat alright to Zhang Ye, but he only found it to be not too bad and did not think that it was anything special. After dragging on for a long time, there was still no conclusion. After that, Designer Li Xianghe took out his designs for the Chinese Kwa. After half an hour of discussions, Xin Ya, Fat Sis, and the others found some of the designs to be really nice, but Zhang Ye was also not happy with them. He was someone who wasn't really picky when it came to things that he ate or used for himself. He would usually be fine with anything and could accept the shortcomings of whatever was given to him. But for Old Wu, he wasn't going to be shoddy about it at all. He would not give the nod if there was even a minor detail that he was unsatisfied with. His standards were raised higher when in the pursuit of perfection.

The two designers, Julie and Li Xianghe, gave each other a helpless glance.

Wu Mo was sweating by now. "Brother Zhang, are you going to decide on anything at all?"

Fat Sis said, "Are they all really not to your satisfaction?"

Xin Ya said, "Why don't we wait for Zeqing to arrive first before deciding."

Zhang Ye said, "I know what she will like."

Fat Sis remarked, "Aren't you also involved in the arts? Why don't you design one yourself?" She found what she said rather funny herself.

But Zhang Ye was taken aback!

Me? Design one?

Right!

I can design something myself!

There are so many designs available from back in my previous world!

Zhou Xun's Chanel?

Yang Ying's Dior?

Liu Shishi's Carven?

How about that design that Princess Diana wore?

And so many other world-famous bridal gown designs!

I won't design one that is exactly the same, but it shouldn't be difficult if I were to use the general design of one and find a way to suit it to Old Wu's style. The ideas he had in mind were not something that either of these designers could match. The designs in Zhang Ye's mind were the essence of all the famous designers' style and wisdom, and they had even had the consensus of the public who had seen it before!

Right!

I'll do it myself!

Thinking of this, Zhang Ye took the chance to go and get a drink. At the same time, he opened the game ring interface and took a Memory Search Capsule, going through the various styles of bridal

gowns in his mind!

Chapter 1282: In the headlines again!

At the bridal shop.

It was already noon.

This was a private location belonging to Fat Sis. Her company was in the business of making games, while the wedding studio was just run on the side. At this moment, only the few of them were in the shop as Fat Sis had already sent away all unrelated personnel in advance. For any details related to Zhang Ye's big wedding and the choosing of the dress, they of course could not let any outsiders find out.

Zhang Ye was still "drinking" water by himself.

Fat Sis said to Julie, "For my sister's big wedding, you better not hold back any of your gown designs, alright?"

Julie smiled and said, "My dear sis, how long have we known each other? Even if I were to keep any of my designs hidden, I wouldn't do it to you. I've already brought out all the designs I have from inside the wardrobe, so how could I still have anything to hide from you? Teacher Zhang is also involved in the arts, so his requirements are naturally of a higher standard. Everyone's aesthetic values are different; that's where the difficulty lies in designing a bridal gown. If he's still not satisfied with what I have here today, I can go back and have a discussion with my team to quickly come up with a few more new designs. But there wouldn't be enough time and we might not be able to get it out in time for the wedding."

Fat Sis asked, "Are you sure you really don't have any other designs?"

Julie said, "I really don't."

"But you're the best bridal gown designer in the industry."

Julie said, "That's why everything I brought today are my own

designs. Every piece is unique and there aren't any mass produced gowns among them."

Suddenly, Zhang Ye came over.

Fat Sis said, "Why don't we go with this piece? It's actually really nice."

But Zhang Ye surprisingly said, "Let me design something for Old Wu myself!"

Wu Mo was stunned. "Huh?"

Xin Ya stared wide-eyed. "Whoa, you're actually going to do it?"

Zhang Ye nodded and said, "Yeah."

"You want to design it yourself?" Fat Sis said in surprise, "This may carry a very great significance, but as a guy and a layman, what could you possibly know about designing a bridal gown?"

Zhang Ye said, "I'll give it a try."

Julie also smiled but said nothing of it.

Zhang Ye said, "Do you have any designing tools?"

Julie said, "All of them."

Zhang Ye looked at her. "I don't actually know how to use these professional tools. Why don't I describe it while you draw it? I'll let you know how I want it to be and what kind of floral patterns to use. You can draw it wherever I point. The overall style and look of the wedding dress, down to the stitching, is in my head. You can just help me bring out what I have in mind to life."

You're really going to do this?

Isn't this ridiculous!

Julie forced a smile and cast a glance at Fat Sis.

Fat Sis threw her hands up in resignation.

Julie could only say, "Alright."

She brought out her tools like a ruler and the such, then got seated.

Zhang Ye stood behind her and started dictating.

"I want the veil to be this way.

"No, it should be a little longer.

"Yes, the mesh size should be slightly larger.

"Shorten this side by a millimeter.

"A little longer...longer.

"Give it a double layer and stack them together."

At first, Julie wasn't really bothered by it, and neither were the others.

Occasionally, she would object to some of his suggestions. "If you do it this way over here, it would look too simple. There won't be a sense of layering this way."

But with every objection that she raised, Zhang Ye would always say, "Just trust me."

And when the general outline of the bridal gown was drawn?

Julie was greatly astonished!

Wu Mo's eyes grew bigger and bigger!

The bridal shop's door was pushed open. Wu Zeqing had finished work had driven herself over. But she realized that no one had noticed her even after she came into the shop. All of them had their heads lowered as they stared at the drawing board in amazement.

Wu Zeqing chuckled. "What's going on here?"

Xin Ya looked up. "Oh, you're finally here?"

"Something came up and I got delayed." Wu Zeqing walked over. "What is this?"

Fat Sis pulled her over in excitement. "Hurry up and see this. Your husband is personally designing a bridal gown for you. It's almost complete!"

Zhang Ye was completely unaware of his surroundings. He didn't realize that Wu Zeqing had arrived. All of his focus was on this bridal gown's design sketch. At times, he would point to suggest what he wanted to be put in. When he couldn't properly relay what was needed, he even nudged Julie aside to draw the idea in his mind so that she would understand what he meant.

Half an hour later.

The sketch of the bridal gown's design was complete!

When they held up Zhang Ye's sketch, everyone turned to look!

Julie was stunned!

Wu Mo was stunned!

Xin Ya was stunned!

Fat Sis was stunned!

Wu Mo exclaimed, "Damn, that's too beautiful!"

Fat Sis said excitedly, "It's really, really nice! It's so befitting of Zeqing's demeanor!"

Julie looked at Zhang Ye in shock. "How did you do it?"

Beside her, the Chinese Kwa designer was also quite taken aback.

Zhang Ye said quite happily, "So is this alright?"

Xin Ya said in astonishment, "This is more than alright!"

Wu Mo asked, "Are you a professional, Brother Zhang?"

Zhang Ye started. "Whoa, Old Wu, when did you arrive?"

"Me?" Wu Zeqing smiled at him. "I got here long ago."

Zhang Ye hurriedly said, "Have a look at this and see if it's fine? Do you like it? If you don't like it, you can have a look at the other

designs too. Teacher Julie brought several designs..."

Wu Zeqing looked at the sketch of the bridal gown's design and said with a smile, "There's no need to look, I'll wear this."

Everyone crowded around the sketch and cried out in astonishment from time to time. It was just so beautiful. Even though the finished product was not out yet, they could already feel the breathtaking beauty and luxury from the drawing itself!

Wu Zeqing asked, "What about the Chinese Kwa?"

Zhang Ye said spiritedly, "I'll design it!"

Fat Sis said, "You even want to do that?"

Zhang Ye said, "But of course!"

This fellow was really getting a kick out of designing the dresses!

Without another word, he started dictating to Li Xianghe as well.

"It will be hand-embroidered here.

"No, not this type of pattern.

"Aiya, that's not it. Here, I'll draw it!"

Another hour passed.

The Chinese Kwa design was also completed!

When everyone saw it, they felt beyond speechless!

Julie was stunned again!

Xin Ya was dumbfounded!

Wu Mo grabbed Zhang Ye by the arm. "Brother Zhang! Lord Zhang! Is there anything that you don't know how to do! You're too impressive!"

Zhang Ye smiled and asked, "Does it look good?"

Wu Mo said, "It's so good that I've been blinded!"

Fat Sis was also overjoyed. "It looks better than good! The key is

that it fits Zeqing's demeanor so well. It's simply tailor-made for her!"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Well, it's literally tailor-made for Old Wu."

Xin Ya looked at her best friend. "I'm starting to get jealous of you, Old Wu. To be able to wear a bridal gown and Chinese Kwa that was designed by one's own husband, how romantic!"

Zhang Ye said, "Do you like it?"

Wu Zeqing smiled. "I like it very much."

Zhang Ye was getting the hang of it and said, "Alright then, I'll design another one if you like!"

Another one?

Wu Mo nearly tripped and fainted. "Do you think that this is a crosstalk encore! That you can keep cracking jokes if the reception was good?"

Everyone laughed.

...

On the same night.

The news leaked.

Some well-connected media outlets managed to seek out Julie, and it wasn't just one or two of them. Over twenty media outlets' and television stations' personnel had come to look for her.

A group of reporters interviewed her.

"Teacher Julie!"

"What style of a bridal gown did you design for Zhang Ye's wife?"

"Did you get to see the bride? Who is it?"

"Teacher Julie, how much does the bridal gown cost?"

"When will the finished product be out? Will you make it in time

for the wedding?"

The amount of questions was overwhelming!

This wasn't Julie's first time designing a bridal gown for a celebrity. She had dealt with such situations a myriad of times and knew exactly how to handle the questions. "I can only answer a portion of your questions. Teacher Zhang's wife's bridal gown is actually not my design at all. It was personally designed by Teacher Zhang for her."

What?

Personally designed?

This is big news!

"Surely not, right?"

"How could Teacher Zhang know fashion design?"

"You probably mean designing in the symbolic sense, right?"

Julie smiled and said, "I don't know what you all mean by 'designing in the symbolic sense.' I only know that after interacting with Teacher Zhang today, I feel especially honored and happy." With a pause, she gave a wry smile and said something astonishing. "If Teacher Zhang was working in the fashion industry, a lot of our designers would probably not be able to make a living anymore!"

The media reporters who were present were all dumbfounded!

What kind of an opinion was that?

Zhang Ye really knew how to design a bridal gown?

So much so that the best female bridal gown designer would claim that she wouldn't be able to make a living from designing anymore?

Didn't this opinion rate Zhang Ye a little too high!

Just what kind of a bridal gown did Zhang Ye design?

...

"Zhang Ye personally designs a bridal gown for his wife!"

—This news trended to the top of the Weibo headlines!

The netizens were startled.

"What?"

"That dude even has this skill?"

"I'm cramping up with laughter, Zhang Ye really can't rest idle!"

"Hasn't he taken leave from work? Why is he in the headlines again?"

"He designed the bridal gown? Who would believe that!"

"I don't really believe it either. Just how ugly would it look?"

"I believe it!"

"I believe it too!"

"He can even fly a plane, so why wouldn't he be able to design a bridal gown?"

"Pfft, true that!"

"Teacher Julie's opinion of Zhang Ye is really high, so I don't think it's a lie."

"That raffish fella, is he planning on moving into the fashion scene this time?"

"Why does that guy seem to know everything!"

"But it really does feel quite romantic!"

"Yeah, that guy actually knows how to be romantic. Expressing my disbelief here."

Chapter 1283: The matters of the entertainment industry!

One day.

Two days.

Three days.

For the next few days, Zhang Ye was so busy with the wedding preparations it was like he was getting battered. There was hardly any time to catch his breath. Even with his parents and Wu Zeqing's family helping out, it was still a lot of work. Every little detail had to be given to Zhang Ye to decide on. It was only at this point that this fellow discovered that he had thought too little of a wedding ceremony. This hardly felt like taking leave from work at all. It was even more fucking tiring than working.

"Little Ye, go hurry them up about the bridal gown again!"

"Ah? OK, Mom."

"Otherwise it might be too late!"

"Alright, I'll call them."

"Little Zhang, have you decided on the ring yet?"

"Old Wu can decide on it."

"Zeqing said to let you make the decision. She'll wear whichever one you choose."

"Alright then, let me get in touch with the jewelry company!"

"Hurry up, we don't have much time."

"Understood, Auntie."

"Is the guest list ready yet?"

"I'm getting it done right now."

"A few media outlets criticized you in the past. Will you be

inviting them?"

"Let's see how it goes, I'll think about it again."

"Quickly get it done, we have to get the invitations printed."

"Alright!"

"Aiyo, I forgot something! Do you intend to have any groomsmen and bridesmaids? Who do you want to invite?"

"Auntie, it's easy to get the groomsmen. There's Old Chen, Old Yao, and so many others I could get for my groomsmen. But it won't be easy to get bridesmaids. Old Wu has status, so I can't possibly have Xiaodong, Amy, and the others to be Old Wu's bridesmaids, can I? Old Wu doesn't know them, and neither would they dare to be her bridesmaids. Old Wu is like me. She doesn't have that many friends while her colleagues are mainly from the SARFT. Since there isn't any mix there, it will be difficult to put them together. So I think we will just do away with that. We will not have any groomsmen and bridesmaids for the ceremony and just have everyone gather together to enjoy themselves."

"That makes sense. What about the gifts?"

"I've discussed this with Old Wu already. We won't be taking any presents and gift money."

"Alright then, that's the way to handle it. Zeqing is a civil servant, and she's even in a leadership role. Any gifts would be too sensitive. Anything below a 1,000 RMB must not be accepted. Your group of friends are all big name celebrities and would surely gift in amounts ranging from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of yuan. Since that's how it is, we should just standardize it across the board and not accept any gifts at all."

Although it was a lot of work, it was still pretty enjoyable handling it.

At the thought of marrying Old Wu, Zhang Ye burst with excitement on the inside!

In the rest of the world.

These days, the media outlets were following up closely on the matter to report about it. Some were camping in wait, while others were stalking and watching. As long as there were any slight signs of news regarding Zhang Ye's wedding, it would cause a heated debate.

"The identity of Zhang Ye's wife gets revealed!"

"Exclusive: Zhang Ye's shotgun wedding!"

"Zhang Ye displays a fatigued expression while preparing for his wedding. Is the marriage on the rocks?"

"Zhang Ye to divorce, wedding to be canceled?"

They were all tabloid claims. Any simple rumor could now get hyped up in the media!

The people weren't dumb either. To them, these headlines were just for laughs. As the day of the wedding edged closer, everyone was looking more and more forward to the day arriving!

...

On this day.

The weather was clear.

And everything was calm and peaceful.

Even the sun made a rare appearance in the sky.

However, to everyone's surprise, something happened in the entertainment circle again. At the beginning, it was just a small issue. But as it went on, the matter blew up before finally rocking the entire entertainment industry. The bombshell that had dropped roped in nearly all of the industry insiders of the entertainment circle!

The cause was an extramarital affair.

Han Di, in his twenties, was a slightly well-known film star in

mainland China. Although he had only debuted for a few years ago and was still considered a rookie actor, his popularity already put him among the celebrities in the C-list. Even though he was near the bottom of the C-list, he had a bright future ahead of him. The only issue was that he was a very introverted person who did not like to speak much, rarely taking any interviews, and had very few friends. He was the type of person that didn't like communicating with others.

On Weibo.

The number one paparazzi tabloid that was notorious within the celebrity circle suddenly exposed a piece of news. Han Di's classmate from the Beijing Film Academy whom he had married after their graduation was caught having an extramarital affair.

The number one paparazzi tabloid posted a set of photos: Outside a hotel.

In the car.

Walking towards the hotel.

And even a picture that was taken through the window of a hotel room on the 12th floor.

As the photos were taken at night, they were not too clear. Only the back of a middle-aged man could be seen, but the woman's face was unusually clear, especially since it took place on the 12th floor of the hotel. Two of the photos were taken from the opposite building through the windows. One of them showed Han Di's wife kissing the middle-aged man, while the next photo showed her hands drawing the curtains. This frontal photo was the clearest one of the series!

The people were in an uproar!

"Is this real?"

"Damn, it's probably photoshopped, right?"

"Han Di is quite a nice person. Don't defame him!"

"Yeah, Little Di is always very dedicated to filming and never publicizes his works with news like that. It wasn't easy for him to get to where he is right now. All of it was through his own hard work, so why is this paparazzi tabloid causing trouble again?"

"It must be fake news!"

"Can anyone verify it?"

"Are there any digital imaging experts around?"

Very quickly, some experts verified the authenticity of the photos!

"It's real!"

"Fuck! Han Di has really been made a cuckold?"

"Fuck! I'm so mad!"

"My heart aches for Han Di!"

"This woman is too wicked!"

"She's not famous at all, and is always posting her pictures on Weibo to keep up her presence. All she knows is how to spend Han Di's money. In the end, she even had an affair? Just what is wrong with her!"

"Fuck this!"

"Does she not care about their child?"

A lot of people were enraged!

Some people from the entertainment circle also came forward to condemn this!

Even though a C-list celebrity's status couldn't be compared to someone like Zhang Ye, it was still quite the news in the entertainment circle. The media had often reported about Han Di and his wife too. There really weren't many cases of a celebrity marrying before debuting in show business. The media often

photographed them holding hands and shopping together, bringing their two-year-old child out to the parks, and always looking to be very much in love. As such, this was something no one saw coming!

However, the bigger mess was yet to come!

Two smaller tabloids reported one after another.

The person involved with the woman in the affair actually turned out to be the president of Han Di's talent agency, Zhao Chipeng!

Tianfang Entertainment. One of the largest entertainment companies in the country and was even listed on the stock market. There were countless celebrities in the industry who were signed to them. Just the S-list celebrities alone numbered two, one of which was a Heavenly King and the other, a Heavenly Queen. There were even more A-and B-list celebrities in their stables. This makeup of contracted celebrities under their company flag was rarely seen in the other entertainment companies. It spanned celebrities in the music scene, the film industry, and television series too. Tianfang Entertainment was involved in many areas within the industry. Meanwhile, Zhao Chipeng as the president of the company wielded even greater authority. In the entertainment industry, he was an important figure who could summon the wind and rain. He had many business partners in different regions as well, ranging all across Hong Kong and Taiwan too. Even if they were not Tianfang Entertainment's artists, no one would dare to offend Zhao Chipeng. Who didn't need to show him some face?

The photos were exposed!

And it had also been verified as authentic with the person identified as Zhao Chipeng!

A shockwave rippled through the industry!

The public was stunned!

All of a sudden, the wind blew in a different direction!

The industry insiders who had condemned Han Di's wife earlier deleted their Weibo posts seemingly in agreement. Soon after, the top paparazzi tabloid also issued an apology to explain that they had gotten things wrong. Someone paid them to post the pictures that were doctored!

The people were not fools!

"Doctored?"

"Stop bullshitting!"

"You took a payment to do this?"

"Why are they changing their stories now?"

However, there was no response from Han Di's side.

Following that, an even more dramatic development took place!

Han Di's wife suddenly came forward and posted on Weibo. She angrily complained of domestic abuse by Han Di and said that he had neglected their child. She even claimed that he had a mistress and that he was the person who found someone to doctor those photos to make up a story in order to get a divorce from her. She accused him of bribing that top paparazzi tabloid and the other media tabloids in order to tarnish her reputation!

She also posted some so-called evidence to support her claims.

But when the netizens saw it, their scoldings got even fiercer!

"Fucking bitch!"

"You're really too wicked!"

"What kind of evidence is this! Just because your arm has a red patch, it means that Han Di hit you? And that Han Di bribed the paparazzi tabloids? Are you the fool or are we the fools? Would he possibly defame himself this way and let the whole world see that he has been cuckolded? All that just to divorce you? Get out!"

"Do you think we are stupid?"

"Even a fool would not believe you!"

"Claiming innocence by attacking him first? This woman is too sinister!"

"Does she no longer have any feelings for her husband?"

"I only know now that to cover one's own mistake, a person can actually be despicable to such a point. I've really learned something today!"

Soon after, the president of Tianfang Entertainment also posted on Weibo.

Zhao Chipeng: "Han Di, I've trusted you as a friend all this time. Ever since your debut, I've liked you very much and always gave you the best opportunities. Now that you've gained some fame, you've started to change. You even know how to resort to such underhandedness? Hur hur, take it that I've trusted the wrong person. Don't forget that you still have a contract with Tianfang Entertainment. You want to mess with me? Then be prepared for the consequences. I'll play your game since this is what you want!" He directly accused Han Di of framing him and chose to gloss over the matter of the exposed pictures.

Very quickly, this news spread.

Han Di would not be getting any more film projects to work on!

He wouldn't be attending any more commercial performances!

Tianfang Entertainment had as good as froze him forever!

"What?"

"Zhao Chipeng, you're too damn wicked!"

"Motherfucker!"

"You're actually accusing him first?"

"Is that you in the photographs? Tell us!"

"You fucking bedded another person's wife and still dare to accuse others of wrongdoing?"

"You old bastard!"

"I'm so angry!"

"Motherfucker, what is this shit!"

"Do these people really not have a shred of humanity left in them?"

The people were all scolding them!

But right now, the media and industry were siding with Zhao Chipeng, strongly giving him their support!

A B-list celebrity: "@ZhaoChipeng Boss, don't be bothered about that gossip. Who doesn't know what kind of a person you are?"

Another entertainment company's vice president posted a smiley face on Weibo. "Boss Zhao has met with an undeserved catastrophe. People these days really dare to do all sorts of things. I had thought very highly of Little Han back then too, but it looks like I was totally wrong about him."

A C-list artist: "@HanDi We're all from the same company. Why do you have to be so ruthless?"

The media also changed their stance entirely!

"Han Di's domestic abuse!"

"Han Di gets put into the freezer!"

"You can't judge a book by its cover. Han Di's true colors!"

"Tianfang Entertainment's president hounded by rumors!"

There were quite a few people from the industry and media raging against Han Di!

Meanwhile, some of the others from the industry chose to keep their silence on this matter. Even the only two friends Han Di got along quite well with did not say a word. At this moment, no one

in the entire entertainment circle came forward to speak up for Han Di!

Chapter 1284: Zhang Ye, the busybody!

And this was only the beginning!

On the same day, Han Di's "dirt" kept getting exposed. However, none of those accusations had any conclusive evidence and were just plain accusations!

The media was attacking Han Di with wave after wave!

People from the entertainment industry kept appearing one after another to condemn Han Di!

There was also a large troll army that appeared out of nowhere that started lashing out and cursing at Han Di on Weibo and the various forums. They all accused him of not caring for his child and the relationship with his wife in his bid to gain something out of this despicable act of accusing his own wife and boss at work. They were saying how he totally deserved it and how it was right that he was frozen!

The public was dumbfounded!

"How did it turn out like this?"

"Fucking hell!"

"Zhao Chipeng, you should be the one who deserves to die!"

"It wouldn't be enough even if he were to die 10,000 times over! He's too wicked! This man is simply too wicked!"

"There's Han Di's wife too. I finally know what they mean when they say that a married woman has the most toxic heart of all!"

"Dammit, I don't believe this! I don't believe that everyone has gone blind!"

"They didn't go blind, and know full well what is going on. Just look at who are the ones making the most serious accusations. They're all people who have connections with Zhao Chipeng. They're all people related to Tianfang Entertainment. Then look at

the big name celebrities, which of them have spoken up? They've all chosen to keep their mouths shut since this is the best way of self-preservation. Han Di isn't some big shot anyway, so would there be any point in offending one of the greatest funders of the entertainment circle? Who would be that dumb! So of course they'd act aloof regarding this matter since it doesn't concern them directly. Even Han Di's two friends did not say a word!"

"Wang Zhe! Say something!"

"Li Duohai! Aren't you guys Han Di's friends?"

"Why aren't you two speaking up for him! Fuck!"

"What kinds of friends are they? Can you even call them friends!"

"The photos from before have all been deleted!"

"I posted something earlier that analyzed the evidence thus far. But dammit, all of it got deleted by the Weibo authorities the moment I posted them!"

"Mine too!"

"As long as it's related to Zhao Chipeng, it will be deleted!"

"They're deliberately misleading the public's opinion!"

"Many of the media outlets have been paid off to do so too!"

"Just look at the familiar scenes happening everywhere. It's obvious that this was done by them!"

For the entire day!

Han Di was getting scolded for the entire day by people in the industry!

However, Tianfang Entertainment's PR representatives had probably not expected that it was precisely because of these strong accusations that led to the people getting entirely outraged!

"What a bunch of bastards!"

"There are no good people in the entertainment circle!"

"My heart really aches for Han Di!"

"I wonder how he's coping."

"Can he accept this?"

"I don't know, I'm really anxious about him too!"

"This is too sudden. This is much too sudden!"

...

Old Chen's house.

Chen Guang smacked his hand against the table and said, "They've gone too far!"

Fan Wenli also looked frustrated. "Zhao Chipeng is behaving too lawlessly."

Chen Guang's agent, who was beside him, forced a smile and said, "But what can be done? I believe that when the paparazzi tabloid first posted those photos, they didn't expect that the person in the pictures would turn out to be Tianfang Entertainment's president. They were the ones who let the cat out of the bag, and now they want to recapture it. The people are really not going to have any of it."

Fan Wenli sighed. "Han Di has lost everything this time."

...

At Ning Lan's house.

The members of Spring Garden were here as well.

Feeling suffocated, Ning Lan said, "How can things be like this?"

Xiaodong said angrily, "That woman is really too vicious! She can change at the snap of a finger. When their child grows up and learns about this event, what will the child think? Doesn't she know how greatly this would affect the child? Are there even such mothers in this world?"

Ning Lan said, "She's doing this to protect herself."

Amy scolded, "Hell! Even a vicious tiger would not eat its cubs!"

Li Xiaoxian suddenly said, "Can we speak up for Han Di?"

Ning Lan shook her head. "How can we say anything? Your talent agency has a close working relationship with Tianfang Entertainment. Are you girls thinking of not continuing in this line of work? Or end up getting frozen too? Even if you three aren't afraid of the consequences, what about the staff around you? What about your fans? Don't forget that at our status and level, there are too many people who depend on us to make their living. Zhao Chipeng is one of the largest investors in the entertainment circle. Whoever offends him would not be able to survive long in this industry."

The four of them fell silent.

...

At an industry party.

"What do you guys think of this?"

"Hai, let's not talk about it."

"We can only pretend like we didn't see it."

"There's nothing that we can do about such matters. That's Zhao Chipeng we're talking about."

"Yeah, how many people in the industry would dare to go against him? There isn't anyone at all."

"But the people are in an uproar and it seems like they won't let it slide."

"So what? President Zhao does not depend on his popularity to make a living. He's just an investor who controls the funding. And besides, it's not like he would get hurt by a few harsh words from the people anyway. Would he care? Just look at how many people in the industry dare to say anything about this. Everyone can't wait to speak up for President Zhao and are taking the opportunity

to cozy up to him."

"This is just what the entertainment circle is like."

"Han Di is done for."

...

The matter blew up even more!

It was getting more and more out of hand!

Meanwhile, the person at the center of it all still did not say a word!

Han Di's house.

His two-year-old child was wailing and asking for its mother.

Han Di's elder sister, who was also his agent, was also crying. "Insane! Those people are really insane! Little Di, can't you say something to address the situation? Talk to Sis!"

Han Di sat there in silence, looking at the wall in front of him.

It had been like this for the entire day!

Han Di did not utter a single word!

His sister said helplessly, "Little Di! Sis is begging you! Don't scare me like this!"

His wife's betrayal!

Zhao Chipeng's malice!

His friends' abandonment!

The media's slander!

The condemnation from the industry's people!

In the span of one night, he had lost everything!

Han Di was silent, sitting there like a statue.

Suddenly, the front door opened as Han Di's parents rushed in frantically. "Little Di!"

It was only now that Han Di's expression changed a little. He looked up at his parents as his tears fell freely. He asked, "Dad, Mom, is this the show business that I've always loved and looked forward to?"

His parents cried!

Han Di's mother and sister hugged him and couldn't stop crying!

...

On the same night.

At Old Wu's parents' courtyard house.

After dinner, Zhang Ye helped Li Qinqin with the dishwashing. When he was finished with the chores, he and Wu Zeqing strolled around the yard to aid their digestion.

Old Wu asked, "Have you seen the news?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I did. No one cares about our wedding now."

Old Wu said, "What were you thinking at dinner?"

"Nothing." Zhang Ye blinked.

Old Wu giggled. "Do you think I don't know you?"

Zhang Ye smacked his lips and said, "Well, I was just thinking about how this situation felt really familiar. Have you forgotten? Back then, I was also suppressed by such public opinions a few times. It was a good thing that this bro's mouth is much more capable than those who accused me of things. It didn't matter how many people attacked me, I never got frightened. I ruled for so long and couldn't find an equal!"

Old Wu said, "Han Di is not as eloquent as you."

Zhang Ye sighed. "That something so big has happened and Han Di still hasn't opened his mouth to give an explanation or made any criticism yet, I really have to admit that I'm very impressed by

him. I know that it's not that he doesn't want to speak up, nor that he doesn't know how to do so. It's simply because he knows he can't do that. That guy must be a good person."

"You're sure of it?"

Zhang Ye said, "Yes."

"Then what do you intend to do about it?"

Zhang Ye calmly answered, "You know that I'm a guy who loves being a busybody."

Chapter 1285: 'A Madman's Diary' surprises everyone!

It was getting late.

The weather was turning wintry, but it was still quite bright in the courtyard.

Zhang Ye stood in the yard and looked at the moon in silence. Footfalls approached from behind as a woman's coat was placed over him.

It was Wu Zeqing. "Don't catch a cold."

Zhang Ye glanced back. "Thanks."

Old Wu said, "What are you thinking about?"

Zhang Ye said, "I'm thinking about how screwed up a place the entertainment industry is."

The door opened and Li Qinqin walked out. "Little Ye, it's quite late, so why don't you stay over for the night? You can have the guest room. Although the bed is a little small, it'll be fine if you just squeeze in a little and make do with it. Your uncle is away on business and won't be home tonight. This way, Zeqing can stay over with me and you can also save the trouble of having to go back so late at night."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Sure, Auntie."

Li Qinqin reminded him, "It's getting late. Hurry up and get some sleep."

Zhang Ye shrugged. "Alright, I'll do that as soon as I'm done with some work."

"Work?" Li Qinqin said, "Aren't you on leave?"

Zhang Ye said, "Yes, but there's something else that I need to take care of."

A moment later, Zhang Ye entered the office and powered on the computer.

Li Qinqin was still a little worried. "Zeqing, what's he busy with now?"

Wu Zeqing smiled and said, "Don't worry about him. He's just off being a busybody again."

...

On Weibo.

The drama was still going on. In fact, it was getting more and more exciting!

Zhao Chipeng started denouncing Han Di again, appealing to the industry to boycott a despicable celebrity like Han Di. Zhao Chipeng's wife also came forward at around 10 PM to show her support for her husband. She expressed that she and Han Di's wife were good friends and had heard of her complaining many times about the violence at home. She did not bring out any evidence of that happening but kept claiming that she had seen it with her own eyes. At the same time, she raged about how Han Di was trying to frame her husband. Afterwards, Han Di's wife also started interacting with Zhao Chipeng and his wife on Weibo. Family violence, beating their child, all kinds of terrible deeds were pinned onto Han Di!

"Despicable!"

"That illicit couple!"

"None of them are good people!"

"Aren't they afraid of going to hell?"

"Bastards!"

"This is pissing me off! I'm so furious at them!"

"I've never seen people as sinister as them!"

On the streets.

In the alleys.

Throughout every household.

The people were cursing like mad. It was so infuriating that a lot of them could not fall asleep!

All the common folk knew full well what was going on, yet everyone in the entertainment industry was choosing to play dumb! The public rarely hated someone so badly. But this time, it crossed the line to the point of being abhorrent. Han Di was keeping silent for the sake of his child. But Zhao Chipeng and the others kept fanning the flames. They were openly twisting lies into truth. This was as good as putting a noose around Han Di's neck and tightening the knot!

Some of those who felt that they were really left with no choice went onto Weibo to ask their favorite celebrities by mentioning them!

"@JiangHanwei Please say something!"

"Teacher Jiang, please speak up for Han Di, will you?"

"@FanWenli!"

"Sister Fan!"

"Please help Han Di!"

"@LiYu Didn't you act in a movie with Han Di?"

"Teacher Li Yu, please help him out!"

"@ChenGuang!"

"@Xiaodong!"

"@NingLan!"

"@ZhangYuanqi!"

"@SunGuang!"

"Please help Teacher Han Di. We will remember your kindness forever!"

"Why is this happening?"

"Why aren't any of you saying anything!"

Countless Han Di fans even went over to the Weibo of his two friends!

"Teacher Wang Zhe!"

"Teacher Li Duohai!"

"I beg of you two! I really beg of you two!"

"Can you two please say something?"

"Han Di is going through the most painful time right now, can't you two offer him some comfort!"

"Please go and help Little Di!"

Silence!

The silence was deafening!

No one said a word!

No one made a sound!

This silence left a chill in many of the common folk's hearts. It was so cold that it sent a shiver down their spines. If even Han Di's two good friends were keeping quiet at this time, who else could they rely on? Who else could they turn to?

Was this what show business was like?

Just what kind of a place was it!

Right at this moment, an unexpected person gave voice to the people!

It was Zhang Ye!

He suddenly updated his blog!

Someone found out about it.

"Zhang Ye posted something on his blog!"

"Who cares to hear about his wedding at this time!"

"It's not about the wedding! It's a story!"

"What?"

"Why do you care about a story!"

"Dammit, just go and read it!"

"This, this isn't just any story!"

"Everyone, get in here! Something big has happened!"

"Fuck, Zhang Ye has made his move!"

The news spread like it had sprouted wings, with many people coming over the moment they heard about it. What story? What had happened?

Chen Guang opened the blog!

Zhang Xia turned on her computer!

Ning Lan turned her attention to it!

Huo Dongfang, Amy, Jiang Hanwei, Li Yu, and countless other people all came over to Zhang Ye's blog to take a look!

...

"A Madman's Diary¹"

1

Moon's real bright tonight. Haven't seen it in over thirty years. Seeing it now, I feel like a new man. I suppose I've been out of my mind for the past thirty years. But I've still got to be very careful. Why else would the Zhao family's dog give me a double take?

I have reason to be afraid.

...

This first passage had very few words!

But every word left the readers in shock!

The Zhao family's dog?

Chen Guang was dumbfounded!

Ning Lan wore a shocked expression!

Huo Dongfang gasped!

Jiang Hanwei was stunned!

Countless people and industry insiders were so shocked that their hair stood on end. And that last sentence also made them feel rather ashamed!

I have reason to be afraid?

When the people of the entertainment industry read this, they were silenced!

...

2

No moonlight at all tonight, I know that something's not right. When I crept outside this morning, Old Mr. Zhao had a funny look in his eyes: maybe fearful, maybe dangerous. There were also seven, eight people who had their heads together whispering about me. One spread his mouth wide and grinned at me. I was chilled from head to toe, realizing that their plan was already set in motion.

But I wasn't gonna let that scare me and kept walking. Ahead was a group of kids, and they too were talking about me. The looks in their eyes were the same as Old Mr. Zhao's, and their faces were ashen. I wondered what grudge they had with me that they would also behave this way. Unable to bear it, I shouted, "Tell me!" But they just ran away.

I've got it! Their parents taught them to be this way!

Now that I think about it, I get a shiver that runs from the top of my head clear down to the tips of my toes.

If they would eat people, then who knows if they'll eat me.

You have to really study something before you understand it. I remembered hearing that since the olden days, people have often eaten people, though I was a bit foggy on the details. So I leafed through a history book, which was undated, and scrawled everywhere, across every page were the words benevolence, justice, virtue. Since I was tossing and turning in my sleep, I decided to study it for most of the night, when I realized that packed between the lines of the entire volume were two words: eat people!

Well, I'm a person too, and they want to eat ME!

...

Eat people!

Eat people!

Eat people!

This short story framed as a diary and written in vernacular kept revolving around those two words!

A lot of people trembled with fear!

A lot of people felt a chill crawl up their spines!

Eating people in the entertainment industry!

This was a place where people ate people!

Every word in the short story was dripping with blood!

...

Can't think of it anymore.

Just realized that, for a long time, I've drifted along in a place that has been eating people for the past 4,000 years. Little Sister happened to die right as Older Brother took over the house. There's no telling if he gave some of her to us to eat.

Who knows if I didn't accidentally eat some of my little sister's flesh? And now it's my turn....

Even though I didn't know it then, now that I know I have 4,000 years of cannibalism behind me, it's so hard to look real people in the eye!

13

Maybe there's still children who haven't eaten people yet?

Save the children...

...

The short story ended here!

A lot of people just froze after reading it!

Lu Xun's "A Madman's Diary" from Zhang Ye's previous world had been presumptuously used over here in this way. Not for conscience, nor was it for Han Di.

But for the children!

Or maybe it was for the future?

Chapter 1286: Tearing a hole in the sky of the entertainment industry!

100,000 hits!

1,000,000 hits!

10,000,000 hits!

The views on "A Madman's Diary" exploded!

A short story framed as a diary and written in vernacular that many people did not even know was a style set off a tsunami in the country. It stunned everyone!

This was going head-on!

This was fucking going head-on against Zhao Chipeng!

The entire work was almost fully expressed as the inner thoughts of a madman. The madman thought that all the people around him were eating people, and that he would either be forced to eat others or get eaten as well. After the madman was locked up, he refused the food sent to him by his family and also attempts to get him medically treated. He just kept telling the people around him to not eat people anymore. At the end, the madman realized he could have accidentally eaten his own sister's flesh and cried out in despair. The entire story was told through the perspective of a madman suffering from the fear of persecution. It exposed the essence of "eating people," and Zhang Ye had used this madman's claims to tear down the entertainment industry and society as a whole, layer by layer. Every word in the story left a creepy thought in the readers' minds!

From anger!

To despair!

To screams!

And even one's hopes of the future!

All of that was contained in the story!

The literary world was stunned!

The entertainment industry was uneasy!

The people burst into an uproar!

"Maybe there's still children who haven't eaten people yet?"

"Save the children!"

These two lines were a sword plunged mercilessly into everyone's hearts!

...

Old Chen's house.

Chen Guang smacked his forehead. "This is bad!"

Fan Wenli said in surprise, "Why did Zhang Ye pop out!"

"How would I know!" Chen Guang said anxiously.

...

At Old Yao's house.

Yao Jiancai was startled. "The Zhao family's dog?"

His wife was also panicking. "This is going to be bad!"

But Yao Mi jumped to her feet and said, "As expected of Teacher Zhang! As expected of Teacher Zhang!"

Old Yao's wife said, "What are you shouting for? Your Uncle Zhang has gotten himself into big trouble this time!"

...

At Ning Lan's house.

Xiaodong was dumbfounded!

Amy was stunned!

Li Xiaoxian was also so startled that she felt a chill run down her spine!

Ning Lan gasped and said, "Is this what a skilled writer is capable of? It's really great! Zhang Ye doesn't even need to use his mouth to kill someone! Without saying a word or opening his mouth, give him a pen and he can rip a hole in the sky!"

...

At Zhang Xia's house.

Her daughter helped to put a coat over her shoulders. "Mom, it's time to sleep."

Her grandchild was sleeping soundly in the baby crib.

Zhang Xia looked over at her little grandchild and mumbled to herself, "Save the children?"

...

Online.

On Weibo.

In the forums.

The people were raising a ruckus!

No one had thought that Zhang Ye would come forward at this time, nor did anyone expect that he would actually post such an earth-shattering story!

"Oh my God!"

"I can feel a chill creep up my spine!"

"After reading the story, I felt a shiver run down my spine!"

"Madman? Lunatic?"

"To post this sort of story at this time, Zhang Ye must be that madman!"

"A war is gonna break out!"

"The entertainment circle is going to descend into chaos!"

"Could he possibly know Han Di?"

"That's impossible!"

"They've never had any contact or dealings!"

"Yeah, it's impossible that the two of them would know each other!"

"Then why did Zhang Ye do this?"

"Zhang Ye is also a member of the entertainment industry, so why does he try to lead the way and declare war on the entire industry? To go against someone who's funding the entertainment industry? He really must be crazy!"

"But then again, that's exactly who Zhang Ye is!"

"Yeah, that's who he is!"

"I like him so much!"

"Me too, I love him!"

"Ahhhhh!"

"Brothers, stop sleeping. Wake up, everyone!"

"Someone's finally leading the way!"

"Motherfucking hell! There's someone standing forward at last! There's finally someone who's putting in a honest word for Han Di!"

The comments below the blog post, "A Madman's Diary," blew up!

Zhang Ye's fans came forward one by one too.

"Lord Zhang, are we going into battle?"

"Shall we get the fighting started?"

"We're here!"

"I see it!"

"Understood!"

"Got it!"

"Received!"

"As you wish!"

[illegible]

"Come, let's go and help Han Di out!"

"Charge!"

"Let's make Old Dog Zhao answerable for this!"

"Zhang Ye's fan club has gathered!"

"Attack!"

Han Di's fans also came forward. They simply could not believe their eyes. When they saw the story, many of Han Di's female fans cried. Some of them even finished reading the story with a face covered with tears! With Han Di getting framed by his boss, being betrayed by his wife, and then frozen by the company, no one said a word in support of Han Di. Even Han Di's two good friends chose to turn a blind eye to it, and no one in the industry offered to speak up for him. To their disbelief, it was actually Zhang Ye and his fan club who came forward in the end!

This favor was too great!

This sense of loyalty was too strong!

A female fan of Han Di's tearfully left a comment. "Teacher Zhang! Thank you! Thank you so much!"

"We will forever be grateful to you!"

"On behalf of all the fans of Han Di, I thank you for your help. We...we don't know what else we can say!"

"Your grace and kindness will not be forgotten!"

"Thank you!"

"Thank you so much!"

Zhao Chipeng's malice!

The bought off media outlets!

The silence of all of show business!

They had endured it for too long!

They had been stifled for too long!

They had been furious for too long!

The moment Zhang Ye stepped forward, the people finally broke their silence. Many of the other celebrities' fans also emerged from all over the place!

"Count me in!"

"Me too!"

"I can't just stand by watching anymore, fuck!"

"Fuck, let's do battle with them!"

"Go fuck yourself, Jiang Hanwei! I will be a diehard fan of Zhang Ye from now on!"

"Go to hell, Li Yu! I won't ever chase after him again. I'll be Zhang Ye's fan from now on!"

"Damn you, Wang Zhe! Your brother has been bullied to such a point and you're still not speaking up for him? Scram! I won't watch any movies that you act in ever again! I'll only support Zhang Ye from now on!"

"Zhang Ye's the true warrior!"

"He's a real man!"

"Nothing I can say about it! This move of Zhang Ye's is just too damn beautiful!"

"In showbiz, he's the only person who dares to speak up like this!"

"Those celebrities only know how to do charity or get involved in public welfare activities occasionally. They only know how to put up a good front day in and day out, but become cowardly the moment something happens! They don't even know how to differentiate right from wrong! What is truth and what are lies! For celebrities like you, why should I bother liking you? In the end, we still had to depend on Zhang Ye! Aren't you all very good at keeping quiet? Aren't you all very good at holding your tongues? Fuck it then, we don't need you anymore! We won't beg you either! Zhang Ye alone is good enough!"

"I'll be a fan of Zhang Ye's til I die!"

"Come, let's go and fucking curse at that Old Dog Zhao together!"

"Right! With Zhang Ye taking the lead, there's nothing to be afraid of. Let's follow Zhang Ye! Let's follow Zhang Ye's fan club! This legendary figure and legendary fan club, they have never lost a scolding battle before. Zhang Ye is the biggest hooligan in the entertainment circle, so all we need is for him to be on our side!"

"Charge!"

Zhao Chipeng's Weibo was instantaneously under attack!

"Old Dog Zhao!"

"Old Dog Zhao!"

"Old Dog Zhao!"

Han Di's wife!

Those from the entertainment circle who had previously shown support for Zhao Chipeng!

And so on. All of them were getting scolded like crazy by the angry mob!

Tens of millions of scolding comments!

Tens of millions of people participating!

...

Han Di's house.

His sister suddenly exclaimed, "Little Di, Little Di!"

Han Di was still in a daze.

Han Di's parents said, "What's the matter?"

His sister said loudly, "Come and see this! Someone's speaking up for Little Di!"

His mother was taken aback. "Who is it?"

His sister couldn't hold back her tears anymore. "It's Zhang Ye! It's Teacher Zhang Ye!"

Han Di was startled. "Teacher Zhang?"

His sister was desperately scrolling through the pages. "It's crazy, this is getting really crazy! With Teacher Zhang leading the way, everyone is now coming forward in support of you! The media is no longer making any noise. Those celebrities who spoke up for Zhao Chipeng and the chatter in the industry have all fallen silent! He's amazing! Zhang Ye's amazing! His reputation is so great that he and his fans have swept aside everyone else in the entertainment industry! They're so dominating! There aren't too many people who would dare to offend him!"

Zhang Ye?

Why?

Why was he doing this?

Han Di said, "I...But I don't know Teacher Zhang personally."

...

On this night, no one was able to sleep well!

Zhang Ye's story had torn a hole in the sky of the entertainment

industry!

Chapter 1287: China's aunties make their move!

The next day.

In the morning.

In the office in the courtyard house, Zhang Ye woke up.

He turned on his cell phone to check the time and saw that it was still pretty early. But the next second, his phone rang. He glanced at the caller ID and saw that it was Yao Jiancai.

"Old Yao, you couldn't have caught me at a better time. I had just turned on my phone for a few seconds when your call came in."

"What are you even talking about? I've been trying to get through to you for the entire night!"

"Ah? What's the matter?"

"What do you think is the matter? You even dare to go against Zhao Chipeng?"

"Haha, why?"

"Did you have too much to drink?"

"You're the one who drank. I haven't had a drink in many days."

"You're just great. I'm impressed. Did you go to sleep after you posted the short story? You can sleep real tight, can't you? Hurry up and take a look. Go check on Weibo and the news too. Do you know how chaotic it is right now? With your scolding, the people are all following your lead. Zhao Chipeng and those other sponsors who spoke in support of him have all been scolded like dogs. They're even getting called the Zhao family's dogs as per what you described in your short story. The entire matter has spun out of control, do you know just what the situation in the entertainment circle is? As long as they're in show business, everyone was totally

shocked by what you did last night! You really don't seem to care if this matter blows up or not, do you? You're the only rascal who dares to come forward and speak up at a time like this, heh. But coming back to the original point, it really does feel quite good."

"Right?"

"I'm going to make an alt account to have a go at him as well."

"Ah? An alt?"

"Of course! Do you think I'm like you? Zhao Chipeng owns 10% of my talent agency's stocks, do you think I will dare to openly go against him like that? That I don't have to earn a living anymore?"

"In any case, you guys don't have to worry about it."

"It's not like we can do anything even if we care."

Zhang Ye spent the entire morning answering calls.

He hadn't even gotten out of bed yet and dozens of calls came in one after another.

Ning Lan.

Xiaodong.

Zhang Xia.

Fang Weihong.

Chen Guang.

Many of his friends called.

They were either concerned about him or called to praise him for what he did. All kinds of things were said.

The news also gradually reported about it.

"Zhang Ye's new story gets published!"

"Zhang Ye suddenly posts a short story last night, seemingly questioning the entertainment circle?"

"The literary world has high praise for 'A Madman's Diary'!"

"A storm approaches!"

"Zhao Chipeng turns off his Weibo comments!"

"The mysterious silence in the entertainment circle!"

It could be seen that many in the media who reported about this event did not choose to include any radical headlines. All of it sounded very conservative and restrained, and there was no mention of the photos of Zhao Chipeng and Han Di's wife. There was only a brief description of the events that took place yesterday.

Many celebrities remained silent!

A lot of the professionals remained tight-lipped!

There was a very subtle atmosphere in the industry, but it could be perceived from what was going on here!

Due to the fact that they were faced with the people's rage, nobody dared to speak up in opposition at a time like this. That was what "A Madman's Diary" was so good at!

...

Later that morning.

At the entrance of Tianfang Entertainment's headquarters.

Zhao Chipeng came to work with a dark look. When the secretary opened the car door for him to step out, the passersby who saw him were immediately enraged!

"Look!"

"Zhao Chipeng!"

"It's Old Dog Zhao!"

"Ptui!"

"That bastard!"

"Can you be any more wicked than you are!"

Everyone was pointing at him and scolding!

Zhao Chipeng was angered by this and pointed back at them.
"Who do you all think you're scolding!"

"You, of course!"

"The old dog of the Zhao family!"

"You're such a huge bully!"

"Do you really think that no one can curb you?"

A lot of onlookers had gathered and were standing there to confront Zhao Chipeng!

In the end, it was his company's staff that came out to guard and escort him inside!

Zhao Chipeng was furious. When he got inside, he was still pointing at the people outside and saying, "Call the police, immediately! How dare they make a scene outside my company! They're too audacious!"

In the president's office.

The secretary said sweating, "President Zhao, how should we handle this?"

Zhao Chipeng said furiously, "What's the situation?"

The secretary said somberly, "It's not good. Your Weibo, the company's website, and even the artists under us are all being bombarded with scoldings. They have too many people on their side, so many that even the public has joined them. We can't keep them under control. I went to a few media outlets to buy some reports during the night, but they seemed to be hesitating and didn't dare to run any more reports at a time like this. They said that they were afraid that the public would be outraged, so they rejected our requests."

"What are they even thinking!" Zhao Chipeng banged the table.

There was a knock on the door. Several of the vice presidents and high ranking company executives arrived.

"President Zhao!"

"What should we do?"

"The news has blown up."

"We have to quickly do PR!"

"We can't leave Zhang Ye alone anymore. We have to rein him in!"

Zhao Chipeng thought about it for a while and said, "It's not the right time. We have to wait until this blows over before we do anything to him. Let them scold all they want for now, it's not like we will suffer any losses because of it. Do they think that their scolding can bring down this building of mine? How stupid!"

Everyone thought the same as well. They really had not expected things to deteriorate to such a state. Zhang Ye's popularity was really too high and his influence too great. It was completely unexpected that he would stick his nose into this affair, as no one in the entertainment industry would dare to challenge their sponsors like this! This person was really a total oddity. He was a through and through lunatic! But currently, all they could do was endure it. They could only accept it as there was nothing else they could do. Public opinion was surging against them, so they had to tuck their tails between their legs and behave. They needed to wait until the storm blew over, perhaps in a day or two. The common folk couldn't possibly scold them every day and not get on with their lives, right? Besides, it wasn't going to be any use even if they carried on scolding them. It wasn't like they would lose sleep over it.

The tone had been set.

The upper management felt relieved.

It was close to 9:30 AM, which was when more bad news caught them by surprise. It was a news that dumbfounded Zhao Chipeng and the other company executives!

"This is not good!"

"What happened?"

"The stock market has opened!"

"So what?"

"Our stock price plunged the moment the market opened!"

"What?!"

A call auction!

Stock market opening!

Tianfang Entertainment's stock price plunged as large multilateral trades triggered a panic selling!

Zhao Chipeng's expression finally showed a visible change.
"Goddammit!"

Every one of the company's upper management's faces paled. They finally felt it, they finally knew what impact this issue had brought to them!

And they still thought that they wouldn't lose any sleep over this?

They already had their arms broken by it!

How could it be like this!

It was only a short story!

It was just a work of fiction!

How could it have caused something like this!

The company's upper management was getting anxious and immediately convened a shareholders' meeting to discuss what countermeasures to take. Everyone came up with a suggestion to handle the problem, but their faces were also visibly shaken and fearful!

And it was right at this moment that a loud noise sounded from

downstairs!

That familiar tune dumbfounded the company shareholders in the meeting room!

Deng, deng deng deng deng!

Deng deng deng deng deng deng deng!

Deng, deng deng deng deng, deng deng!

"The vast horizon is my love!

"At the foot of rolling green hills flowers bloom!"

Zhao Chipeng was enraged and called out, "What is going on! Go and find out!"

The staff at Tianfang Entertainment's headquarters couldn't keep working, because they could all hear the music that was playing from downstairs. That brainwashing tune left all of them a little wide-eyed. Some of them even started tapping their feet to the rhythm unconsciously!

The findings were reported back very quickly!

There were a 100 aunties plaza dancing at the main entrance of the company!

Zhao Chipeng nearly fainted in anger!

Plaza dancing?

Plaza dancing at the entrance of my company?

This is a business district!

It's working hours right now!

"Call the police!"

"Yes!"

"Quickly call the police and chase them away!"

When the police arrived and found that they were facing 100 aunties, the officers were all at their wits' end. They couldn't

engage them physically or verbally, and were forced to beg them for close to half an hour before they would leave.

When the police left, the shareholders' meeting continued.

Zhao Chipeng said, "As I was saying, the stock price now..."

Suddenly, music played strongly again!

Deng, deng deng deng deng!

Deng deng deng deng deng deng deng!

Deng, deng deng deng deng, deng deng!

Zhao Chipeng said angrily, "What is this! What is it again!"

Soon, the secretary came running back with a miserable look on his face. "President Zhao, it's the plaza dancers again!"

Zhao Chipeng said in consternation, "Didn't the police already chase them away?"

The secretary said nervously, "The aunties who were chased away earlier were from the western neighborhood. The ones outside now are the aunties from the eastern neighborhood!"

Zhao Chipeng smashed his glass. "Call the police!"

The police came back again and managed to get the aunties to leave in a civil manner after much talking.

In the meeting room.

Zhao Chipeng heaved a sigh of relief. "Let's carry on with the meeting. As I was saying, we have to ensure that we maintain the good relationship between the SARFT's leaders and us. We mustn't..." Then he stopped talking!

A female executive put her head in her hands!

A vice president had a look downstairs!

The rest of the company executives felt like they were on the verge of collapse!

A familiar sound played again!

Deng, deng deng deng deng!

Deng deng deng deng deng deng deng!

Deng, deng deng deng deng, deng deng!

Zhao Chipeng flew into a rage and yelled, "What is it again!"

The secretary ran in with a head dripping with sweat. "The aunties from the northern neighborhood have come as well!"

A female vice president said angrily, "The eastern, western, and northern neighborhoods have all come? Where are those from the southern neighborhood then!"

As she spoke, a melody played from the opposite direction!

"You are my-a small-a, small apple!

"However much I love you, it'll never be too much!

"Your small blushing face warms my heart!

"It lights my fire! Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!"

At the company's rear entrance!

The aunties from the southern neighborhood arrived too!

The female vice president was floored!

Zhao Chipeng saw red!

They were doing this on purpose!

They were obviously doing this on purpose!

How could they carry on working like this!

Chapter 1288: So a pen really can kill a person!

Every company's office environment was different.

Some companies liked having classical music playing in the background.

Some employees liked listening to pop music while they worked.

So what was it like to be hearing a plaza dance tune while working? In the past, no one knew the answer to this question. But on this day, the staff of Tianfang Entertainment's headquarters were able to tell everyone else just how fucked up it was!

"Oh my God!"

"I'm on the verge of a breakdown!"

"My head!"

"My ears!"

"Fuck, can I bang my head against a wall!"

"This is too annoying! It's too damn annoying!"

"Just who have we offended!"

"These aunties are awful!"

Some people broke down!

Some people stuffed their ears with cotton balls!

Some people covered their ears and constantly made noise to block out the noise!

Some people were even brainwashed by the music and started humming, unable to stop!

The music was still playing!

Deng, deng deng deng deng!

Deng deng deng deng deng deng deng!

Deng, deng deng deng deng, deng deng!

Some people in group chats were also messaging their colleagues at the branches. They were sending voice messages into the group chat as the plaza dance tunes played in the background.

"To-day we still have

"two more pa-ges of doc-u-ments

"to—fin-ish up so—work hard."

After sending this, the person who recorded the voice message burst into tears!

The people from the branch who heard this message were all confused. But if they had heard "The Hottest Ethnic Trend" before, they would realize that the tempo of this message was fully in accordance with the rhythm of the music.

The entire headquarters was now fully immersed in the ocean of plaza dancing!

Downstairs.

The police returned again.

The nearby northern and southern neighborhood aunties totaling more than a hundred people were asked to leave.

When the aunties left, one of the leader aunties whipped out her cell phone and hesitatingly tapped a group chat. The group chat was named "Walking the Dog" had over 2,000 members.

"The dog has been walked, the police are here."

"Alright!"

"Got it!"

"Sisters from the northern and southern neighborhoods, withdraw for now."

"Great job, everyone, leave the rest to us."

"The group from Northern Neighborhood One will be going in soon!"

"Southern Neighborhood Three's second team is ready to take over the duties!"

"The Fourth Bridge Neighborhoods' plaza dancing group is ready to respond at any time."

For the entire day, there was no stop to the plaza dance tunes at Tianfang Entertainment's headquarters. The police had to respond to the reports so many times they ran out of manpower and had to call the other district branches for support. It would have been easier to handle if they had really caused trouble. They could just arrest the troublemakers and the problem would have been solved easily. But these aunties did not exactly break the law and were only dancing. They were also very cooperative and departed when the police asked them to do so. The only issue was that the groups kept getting replaced by groups of aunties from the other neighborhoods!

The Tianfang staff were no longer in the mood to work, nor could they even if they wanted to. As such, they just stood at the windows like fools and watched those large groups of aunties come and go.

Ten times!

Twenty times!

Thirty times!

The consequences of everything that had gone on today were: The police and the staff of Tianfang Entertainment had all learned the dance moves to "The Hottest Ethnic Trend" and "Small Apple"!

When a passerby saw this sight, they almost died laughing. That person stood to the side and took out their cell phone to record a video of this and published it online.

It was titled: "China's aunties make their move!"

...

Online.

The video was being shared like crazy!

When the netizens saw it, they laughed hard!

"Aiyo, I've been left kneeling!"

"Hahahahaha!"

"I'm dying of laughter!"

"How supportive of the aunties!"

"Damn, this I must Like!"

"I saw it too just now when I passed by the place. It was such an awesome sight. They kept replacing the earlier groups, which had been asked to leave, wave after wave. A few thousand aunties were taking turns doing this, and I heard that the staff from Tianfang Entertainment were nearly driven crazy! It's rumored that Zhao Chipeng nearly trashed his office because of this!"

"Hahahaha, well played!"

"This is so awesome!"

"The aunties make a move and Dog Zhao gets chewed out!"

"Tianfang Entertainment has been conquered by the aunties! Nicely done!"

"Dear aunties, I've wronged you all in the past!"

"Me too. I used to hate those aunties who plaza danced below my apartment building. But damn, I will no longer speak badly about plaza dancing from now on!"

"Forever supporting the plaza dancing industry! This is an industry that belongs to the people, it is an art of the common folk!"

"Hail the almighty aunties!"

"Zhang Ye is very influential!"

"That's true. That guy's the father of plaza dancing, after all!"

"Pfft, hahaha! I can't stop laughing every time I watch it!"

"Everyone's looking to beat up those dogs of the Zhao family!"

"Their stock price has also hit the drop limit!"

On this day, the plaza dancing aunties stole the show and even managed to make it onto the news.

Although the news did not exactly report about this in a positive light and even had a criticizing tone in their report, the common folk were all full of praise for those aunties!

...

The next day.

The headquarters of Tianfang Entertainment was once again taken over by the aunties. And this wasn't even the end of it. Perhaps due to last night's news report about this event, all the other plaza dancing aunties across the country found out about how their sisters from Beijing had carried out such a hugely satisfying event. As such, all of them were fascinated and couldn't hold themselves back!

In an instant, all the branch offices of Tianfang Entertainment or the organizations that worked with them were christened by this plaza dance event!

The Shenzhen branch office fell!

The studio in Shanghai fell!

The administrative office in Nanjing fell!

The overwhelming number of aunties swarmed everywhere to these locations!

All of them experienced the heart-rending plaza dance that had

descended upon them!

The stock price of Tianfang Entertainment crashed once again!

In the morning session of the trading day, Zhao Chipeng led a group of shareholders to prop up the price. At first, they managed to stabilize the price so that it wouldn't increase or decrease. But by the time the afternoon session opened, Tianfang Entertainment's stock price suddenly fell again. In the matter of a minute, it fell from its stable position and hit the drop limit again to cease trading for the day!

...

On the third day.

The plaza dancing activities were still haunting Tianfang Entertainment!

Tianfang Entertainment's stock price got hit once again by the drop limit!

...

On the fourth day.

Tianfang Entertainment's stock price bounced back greatly!

But by the time the trading session came to a close, a panic selloff was triggered!

Tianfang Entertainment got hit by the drop limit again!

...

In a matter of four days, their stock price had fallen more than 30% in total. A stock that was valued at ten yuan per share was now trading at a little over six yuan. What did that mean?

It was a crash!

Their stock price had almost been halved!

The selloff from the equity pledge was also triggered as a result!

The industry was shocked!

Even the people in the financial industry were dumbfounded!

Retail investors steered away!

Stock traders steered away!

Stock exchanges steered away!

Everyone had abandoned them!

When Zhao Chipeng saw his stock's price falling day after day, he was hurting badly!

Tianfang Entertainment's upper management and staff were also panicking over this. It was only now that they understood and truly realized what sort of a crisis the company was going through. Even if they accepted and could bear the loss from this, even if they could survive this, the company would still have taken a beating. Their reputation, authority, resources, and financial power would all take a big hit!

Zhang Ye!

Fuck your grandpa!

Zhao Chipeng and many of the others cursed!

The prior developments left them unable to calm down. None of them could believe that the cause of this current situation was actually due to one person and a short story titled "A Madman's Diary"!

A short story of only 4,000 words!

In only a matter of four days!

It had caused Tianfang Entertainment to lose over 10 billion yuan in the stock market!

Everyone used to say that Zhang Ye's writing was worth a thousand taels of gold per word? Or ten thousand taels of gold per word?

But how was this worth only ten fucking thousand taels of gold per word?!

This was more like a 100 million taels of gold per word!

So Zhang Ye's pen really could kill a person!

Chapter 1289: An industry-wide boycott is ordered!

It was a good day today.

It was a good day on both the Gregorian and Yellow calendars.

At 5:30 AM, before the sun was up, before there were any people out on the streets, before the civil servants began their workday, Zhang Ye and Wu Zeqing, both dressed in low-key attire, arrived at the Xicheng District Civil Affairs Bureau. One of Old Wu's relatives was the head of this bureau and naturally gave the green light for everything. There were no outsiders present.

Inside the Civil Affairs Bureau.

The middle-aged man looked stern.

Zhang Ye and Old Wu were both standing next to him.

"Are you two ready?"

"We're ready."

"Then I'll get started."

"OK."

"I'm really going to begin."

"Third Uncle, can you hurry up?"

"You're obtaining the marriage certificate now. Little Zhang, please be more serious, what are you being so impatient about?"

"Alright."

"I'm very happy to be able to issue you two your marriage certificate. It is a sacred day today, so would the two of you answer my questions in all seriousness. Are you two getting married of your own accord?"

"Yes."

"Yes."

"I now ask that the two of you face the national flag and emblem and read the marriage vows together."

"We join hands in marriage of our own accord. From this day forward, we will shoulder the responsibilities and obligations of marriage as one: filial piety, teaching our children, mutual love and respect, mutual trust and encouragement, and mutual understanding. We will share all that we have, laugh and cry together, and love each other forever. Henceforth, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, be it young or old, through thick and thin, sharing weal and woe, through the ups and downs, to love and to cherish, until death do us part. We promise to uphold our vows made today and will see that we stick firm to them!"

Ta!

Ta!

With the seals stamped, the marriage was legal!

They had finally received the little red book. From this moment on, Zhang Ye and Wu Zeqing were officially considered a lawfully wedded couple. They were really a family now!

Zhang Ye was feeling a little excited.

Wu Zeqing said with a smile, "Third Uncle, we'll be leaving now."

Her third uncle waved. "Go on, the morning staff will be arriving soon. Congratulations, Zeqing. Have a good life together." Then he turned to look at Zhang Ye, who was still busy flipping through the little red book, and curled his lips, saying, "In the future, you must treat our Zeqing well. I don't know how you did it, but you must have earned a lot of karma in your last life to be able to marry a good girl like her." Then he faced Wu Zeqing and said, "Zeqing, in the future—hai, just make do."

Zhang Ye tensed up. "What do you mean just make do, Third

Uncle."

Wu Zeqing and her third uncle both laughed.

After exiting the Civil Affairs Bureau, Zhang Ye swaggered, putting his arm out and around Wu Zeqing's shoulders. This fellow was also getting pumped up. "Darling."

Old Wu asked, "Yes?"

Zhang Ye called out again, "Darling!"

Old Wu said, "What's the matter?"

"Ah, it's nothing, I just wanted to get used to calling you that."

Old Wu smiled. "Hmm, then say it as much as you like."

Zhang Ye rubbed his belly and said, "Alright, let's talk when we get home. My stomach is rumbling. It's time for us to have some breakfast."

The morning papers went on sale at this hour.

"Han Di sues for divorce!"

"Han Di takes Tianfang Entertainment to court to terminate his contract!"

"Han Di's wife could end up with nothing from the marriage!"

"Tianfang Entertainment's stock price collapses. The CSRC to step in!"

"A farce triggered by a story!"

"Tianfang Entertainment's equity mortgage crisis!"

Wu Zeqing bought a few copies of the newspapers.

Zhang Ye took one and browsed through it. "Hey, this Han Di isn't dumb, after all. He even knows that he has to turn to the courts for a settlement."

Wu Zeqing said, "Since it has come to this, he definitely has to sue." She looked at the newspapers and said, "You've really given

Tianfang Entertainment a big problem to deal with. I'm guessing they'll take action against you within the next two days."

Zhang Ye sneered and said, "Come at me then, I'll be waiting."

Ring, ring, ring.

His cell phone rang. It was from an unknown number.

When Zhang Ye answered the call, he got quite the surprise.

"Is this Teacher Zhang Ye?"

"Yes, this is he."

"I'm Han Di. I managed to get your number from a friend."

"Eh, it's you?"

"I've already filed a lawsuit with the courts."

"That's good. You should have done this earlier. If you have any trouble or anything that you need help with, you may ask me. You don't need to worry about being rude."

"Thank you."

"It's nothing."

"You—"

"Is there something else?"

"Have you watched my movies before?"

"Your movies? Nope."

"We've never even met before, so why did you help me?"

"Why? Because I'm someone who likes being a busybody."

"...Thank you."

"My pleasure."

After hanging up, Zhang Ye grinned as he looked at Old Wu.
"How was my answer?"

Wu Zeqing smiled back. "Pretty good."

"Alright, let's go eat!" Zhang Ye pulled Old Wu along and strode off.

Being a busybody?

Tianfang Entertainment's stock price had almost been halved!

The entertainment industry was also plunged into chaos!

To be a busybody to such an earth-shattering extent, you could say that he was the first person dating back to the ancients to achieve something like that!

...

On the same morning.

Whatever was supposed to happen was finally happening!

At Tianfang Entertainment's headquarters.

Zhao Chipeng called for a emergency executives' meeting. "The stock price has finally been stabilized. The people who have been causing a disturbance for the past four or five days are finally stopping. Every issue comes to pass some day. Even if it still isn't totally peaceful, and we still have a court case against Han Di to fight, there's still one thing that we can do right now. We must get it done. If we don't vent, would our Tianfang Entertainment still have a place in the entertainment industry? Could I, Zhao Chipeng, still survive in this business? Whoever started it, whoever owes this debt, I'll fucking make him pay for it bit by bit! I'll make him learn just whose words matter the most in the entertainment industry!"

The higher-ups had long been waiting for this!

"Understood!"

"President Zhao, we've been waiting for your word!"

"Everyone knows what they have to do!"

"Zhang Ye can forget about continuing in this industry!"

"Anyone but him can be let off the hook!"

When they thought about how often they had been scared awake by those plaza dance tunes in their dreams, this group of people hated Zhang Ye to the bone. They and the rest of Tianfang Entertainment's staff from the other parts of the country had been conditioned to feel the presence of the plaza dance tunes even in the quietness of their own homes. They would often hallucinate and feel like the songs were playing around them even though no one came to cause any trouble!

These were the four darkest days of their lives!

These were four days they wouldn't want to remember ever again for the rest of their lives!

And the main culprit who had caused this trouble was Zhang Ye! After bearing with it for the past four days, they could finally fight back. Thinking about this, they could no longer restrain their excitement!

After the meeting, the higher-ups all got down to business!

Some people went out on business trips!

Some people went to make phone calls!

Zhao Chipeng also made eight or nine calls out to his media partner friends, and another dozen-odd calls to his friends and peers in the industry. After being in the business for many years, what Zhao Chipeng could bank on was his social network. Business partners? People he had given a hand to? People whom he had guided and supported? Coupled with the fact that there had been a myriad of changes in the way the industry was run, many of the entertainment companies were no longer rivals. Their existences were often mutually beneficial now, and there was close cooperation between them, even working together on certain projects. Zhao Chipeng was one of the biggest funders of the entertainment industry, so if he were to release word, it would be

as good as an imperial decree!

The news spread like wildfire!

Tianfang Entertainment had ordered an industry-wide boycott against Zhang Ye!

Movies?

TV series?

Variety shows?

Music?

Commercial appearances?

Starting from today, whoever dared to accept Zhang Ye's projects would mean that they were going against Tianfang Entertainment!

Feiyu Entertainment quickly responded to the call!

Xiaohai Media followed close behind!

Xiangtian Records made their stance known!

One company!

Five companies!

Ten companies!

Many of the entertainment companies made their intentions to boycott Zhang Ye public!

The momentum was so great that nothing like it was seen before!

This was a collective boycott of Zhang Ye by the sponsors of the entertainment industry!

Chapter 1290: Calling for his head!

Later that morning.

Beijing Television.

Hu Fei had a sunken expression on his face. "Something has happened!"

Dafei asked, "What is it, Brother Hu?"

Hou Ge said in a startled manner, "What happened?"

Hu Fei said with a heavy heart, "I've just received news. Zhao Chipeng has put the word out and more than a dozen entertainment and media companies have started boycotting Zhang Ye. Our station also received news that if we let Zhang Ye produce his shows here, they would call back all their artists and stop all cooperation with Beijing TV!"

Xiao Lu said in shock, "What?"

Hou Di said angrily, "That is too unreasonable!"

Han Qi also looked frustrated. "Then what can be done? What can be done!"

...

At Zhang Ye's Studio.

Ha Qiqi received firsthand news of this too!

"This is not good!"

"What's the matter?"

Director Zhang is being boycotted!"

"What?"

"By who this time?"

"Who else? It's got to be Zhao Chipeng!"

"It's not only Tianfang Entertainment. This time, it's half of the

entertainment industry's funders boycotting him. It has really blown up this time!"

...

At a music website.

"President Sun, about the new song we're working with Zhang Ye on—"

"There's no need to talk about that anymore."

"Ah? But we've already begun negotiations with them."

"There's no need anymore. Zhang Ye is finished."

"Why's that?"

"He's been shut out by the funders. From now on, whoever tries to work with Zhang Ye will face sanctions from Tianfang Entertainment, as well as the other dozen-odd media companies. If we continue working with Zhang Ye, the artists under contract with those companies will no longer work with us and will even have their song copyrights retracted!"

"How could that be!"

...

In the short span of an hour.

The entire entertainment industry had received news about this.

Chen Guang.

Fan Wenli.

Zhang Xia.

Ning Lan.

The seven S-listers.

All of them received this notice!

A shockwave rippled through the industry!

The entertainment circle flew into an uproar After seven years, another sponsors' boycott has resurfaced in the industry!

Such boycotts happened very often. When some small-time celebrity offended a big shot, the big shot would put out word that there would be no coexistence between the two of them. That was also a form of boycotting. Or when an artist offended some executive at an entertainment company, that executive would also put out word to give the artist a bad time. That was another form of a boycott.

But all those were different from what was happening now!

They were only small issues that didn't have the same momentum as the current boycott!

An industry-wide boycott. This was something on a totally different level!

Thinking back to that day seven years ago, when a domestic film star who had made his mark as an A-list celebrity was boycotted by three entertainment companies after offending them with his diva behavior. Afterwards, an industry-wide boycott was ordered against him for the first time by the industry funders and that A-lister was banished to the bottom of the valley with no one approaching him for roles in their movies. He did not manage to get any commercial opportunities either, as his industry peers denounced him. Soon after, his friends started avoiding him as well. By the end of that year, that really popular A-list celebrity had fallen down to the ranks of the B-list, and further down, to the C-list by the following year. Without any acting opportunities, without any public exposure, that was tantamount to snuffing the life out of an artist.

Up until today, that celebrity who had been the target of the industry-wide boycott never even made an appearance on television. In the celebrity rankings, he couldn't even be seen in the E-list rankings. Furthermore, any reports or discussions

regarding him on the Internet were removed. No one gave him any more attention. They had almost forgotten about this name, and it was only today when the industry-wide boycott resurfaced that many of show business's veterans remembered him.

This was what an industry-wide boycott was!

The most brutal weapon of the entertainment circle was the one that involved the declaration of an unceasing war between the sponsors and a celebrity!

Moreover, this industry-wide boycott didn't just involve three or four entertainment companies. There were more than a dozen companies, which amounted to about half of the entertainment circle's sponsors taking part in the boycott. It was several times more severe than the industry-wide boycott that took place seven years ago! The sponsors collectively put out the word to "kill" Zhang Ye!

Who could survive that?

Who could escape from that?

No one at all!

Not even the Heavenly Kings and Queens!

It was over for Zhang Ye!

This was the immediate conclusion that everyone in the entertainment circle had arrived at!

He had offended too many people this time around, and they were even people who had very strong backing!

In a flash, everyone was calling for Zhang Ye's head!

On Weibo.

It was the people from the crosstalk world who first made a clean break with Zhang Ye.

The crosstalk actor, Tang Dazhang: "The so-called 'A Madman's

Diary' is drivel. Society is not as dark as you think. Show business is not as dark as you say it is. As a public figure, instead of dutifully maintaining the image of the industry, you're singing the opposite tune and causing a panic. There's no one who can put up with your behavior!"

A group of crosstalk actors echoed this!

A part of the literary world's members joined in the denouncement.

A senior figure of the Writers' Association: "Always causing trouble and writing those so-called works that can't even be considered essays. What a disgrace to the educated. You're as good as misleading the people and deceiving them. I can't watch this go on anymore. Starting from today, the literary world has nothing to do with you and whatever you do!"

A group of the literary world's members echoed this!

The education world.

The calligraphy world.

The music scene.

A television station.

A radio station.

Countless people were condemning Zhang Ye!

"Get out of showbiz!"

"We don't need people like you here!"

"Ignorant fool!"

"What kind of a professor are you!"

"Those contributions of yours aren't even worth mentioning!"

"We hope that the people will not be misled by Zhang Ye!"

"Nobody should bear with this behavior of his anymore. It's time

to speak up and make a clean break with Zhang Ye!"

"Everyone, let's boycott him together!"

There were also some big shot celebrities who came forward to denounce him!

Jiang Hanwei!

Li Yu!

Zhao Qiquan!

The artists signed to Tianfang Entertainment!

The artists signed to the other entertainment companies!

All of them were calling for Zhang Ye's head!

Some of these were people whom Zhang Ye had offended before and were his eternal foes. Some of them were people Zhang Ye didn't even know nor met. Still, all of them jumped in to kick Zhang Ye while he was down in order to improve their relationships with the funders of the industry. They were basically tapping into this incident of Zhang Ye's to take a step up as they became a pawn of the funders! But of course, some things could not be said in such a clear manner. The affair between Han Di's wife and Zhao Chipeng could not be mentioned at all, and the boycott by the funders could not possibly be explicitly mentioned in the media either. All of these matters were an open secret within the industry, and no one would be upfront about it! All of these people were the same. The reason they gave for their attacks on Zhang Ye was not that he had offended Zhao Chipeng, but due to some other reason that they found him to be at fault!

Zhang Ye had offended too many people.

Thousands?

Tens of thousands?

Hundreds of thousands?

Even he could not count them all.

When the industry-wide boycott first surfaced, everyone knew that Zhang Ye could no longer survive in the entertainment industry. As such, they naturally did not have any worries and would attack him as they liked. They couldn't wait to get revenge for the times they got bullied by Zhang Ye and were all hoping to return him the favor together on this day!

...

The public was dumbfounded!

"What's going on?"

"Why is this happening?"

"Why are they denouncing Zhang Ye again?"

"Zhao Chipeng has made his move!"

"Ah?"

"When Teacher Zhang wrote 'A Madman's Diary,' he was destined to terribly offend Zhao Chipeng and showbiz's sponsors. All of them are now ready to deal with Zhang Ye!"

"It's an industry-wide boycott!"

"What?!"

"Holy fuck!"

"Do you guys mean to say that this is the same as what happened seven years ago?"

"Yes, that's it!"

"How ruthless! They're really being too ruthless!"

"And this time, it's on an even larger scale! Half of the entertainment industry's sponsors have made their move against Zhang Ye. This is what's happening within the industry, and all that I can mention. Everyone, be prepared. This will be Zhang Ye's greatest predicament since he entered the entertainment industry.

No, rather than saying it's a predicament, it should be called a crisis. With all the sponsors cutting him off, there won't be a chance for Zhang Ye to appear on television, nor will he have any commercial opportunities or anyone who would want to work with him again. This is as good as the end of Zhang Ye's celebrity life. In these days, the word of the sponsors is what matters the most!"

"Damn!"

"Can they be any more unreasonable?"

"Those bastards are this ruthless?"

"Motherfucker, I'm enraged!"

"Teacher Zhang, there's still us standing behind you!"

"Right, we're still here to give you our support!"

"What's the point of us supporting him? The TV stations won't get him to make any more shows, the TV series won't invite him to act, the music platforms won't be working with him either, so if we don't even get to see him in the future, how are we going to support him? What do we support him with? I'm from the industry myself. The waters of the entertainment circle run too deep. It's definitely not as simple as you guys think. Teacher Zhang has angered the sponsors this time, so they're making an example out of him. No one can stop them!"

"But Teacher Zhang is going to get married soon!"

"What will happen to the wedding?"

"Will anyone still go?"

"If that's the case, how many people will even want to attend?"

"Old Dog Zhao!"

"We'll fight him!"

"Bastards!"

"Is there no place for Zhang Ye in show business anymore? I really can't imagine that!"

"I can't imagine it either. Although I've scolded him sometimes and have been pissed off by him before, but—I still fucking like him a lot!"

"Is Teacher Zhang really done for?"

"Is there no one who can stop them?"

"No one at all?"

Anger!

Confusion!

No one could keep their emotions in check.

Someone spoke up.

"There's someone who can stop them."

"Speak!"

"Who is it?"

"The SARFT, of course!"

"Fuck, that's as good as not fucking saying anything!"

"Don't be so facetious!"

"Who can't the SARFT stop! They're the overseeing authority of the entertainment circle, after all!"

The entertainment industry was in a great mess!

Society was in chaos!

The media reports were also coming in one after another.

"Zhang Ye's misdeeds provoke public anger!"

"Zhang Ye to quit show business?"

"Zhang Ye's story accuses the entertainment industry of 'eating people'!"

"No place left for Zhang Ye in the entertainment industry!"

"Will the wedding be held as scheduled?"

"Zhang Ye's wedding to be postponed?"

Chapter 1291: The wedding invitation gets revealed!

Later that afternoon.

In the courtyard of Old Wu's family's house.

Zhang Ye's parents were here, and Old Wu's parents were present too.

The outside world blew up as an earthquake ripped through the entertainment circle. Foes from all over show business came together to denounce Zhang Ye as the industry-wide boycott resurfaced once more after seven years. Regarding this news, even the common people already knew about it, much less the industry insiders. The commotion outside even reached a point that it shocked the Heavenly Kings and Queens. However, the people who were in the courtyard had no reactions to it. They were chatting and laughing as they busied themselves with the wedding invitations.

Zhang Ye's mother said, "You were boycotted again?"

Zhang Ye threw his hands up. "Looks to be so."

"Can't you live a day without causing trouble?" his mother asked.

Li Qinqin smiled and said, "This shows how upright Little Ye is. He abhors evil."

Upright?

Abhor evil, my ass!

You just haven't seen him scamming others!

His mother smiled but did not say a word.

Wu Zeqing also smiled.

Wu Changhe held up a wedding invitation. "Are we inviting Old Sun?"

Li Qinqin said, "Oh, he must be."

Wu Changhe said, "Daughter, what about your colleagues?"

Wu Zeqing smiled. "I've already written them all down. We'll just follow the invite list."

"Son, what about the media?" his mother asked.

Zhang Ye shrugged and said, "I'm not familiar with the media."

Wu Zeqing laughed. "Leave it to me. I'll write a list."

One by one, the wedding invitations were written.

Ring, ring, ring. Zhang Ye's cell phone chirped noisily. It was like he was already expecting it as he said to everyone with a laugh, "See, the calls are starting."

Wu Zeqing said, "Go and answer it then, I'll handle it over here."

His mother said in amusement, "You've been using the same ringtone forever. Shouldn't you change it?"

Zhang Ye walked a little further away and answered the call. The moment the call connected, the extremely anxious voice of Xiaodong came on. Before Zhang Ye could even get a word in, she was rambling: "Zhang'er, Zhang'er, something bad has happened. You've offended them for real this time. Hurry up and think of a way out. The industry has called for a total boycott of you and there's no room for discussion. I know that you're already used to this. The radio station, the TV stations, the literary world, the crosstalk world, and so many others have done it to you before. But it's different this time. It's the sponsors of showbiz who have called for the boycott. You're stuck with no way out. Do you have any idea on how you might deal with it? Hai, don't bother saying anything, how could you possibly have a way to deal with this. The situation now..."

After speaking for a full two minutes, Zhang Ye was finally able to cut in.

Zhang Ye gave a sardonic laugh. "Sister Dong."

"Yes?"

"Can I speak now?"

"Of course, please."

"Send your address to me."

"Ah?! What for? Are you thinking of taking refuge at my place?"

Zhang Ye nearly fainted. Take what refuge! He said: "I'm going to send the invitation to you."

"What invitation?" Xiaodong said in surprise.

"My wedding invitation, of course," Zhang Ye said.

"What? You're still in the mood to hold your wedding?"

"Pfft, why would I not be in the mood? And also Amy's and Xiaoxian's addresses too. Are you all going to come?"

"You've got a really big heart. Yes, yes, how can we not attend your wedding? Even if they've already called for the boycott, we will still go. But you've got to think of something. Otherwise, your future in show business will be—"

"Send your address, I gotta hang up."

Xiaodong yelled: "Hey, hey, hey, wait!"

He hung up.

Yao Jiancai called as well.

"Zhang'er, has the wedding been postponed?"

Zhang Ye was taken aback: "Who did you hear that from?"

"From the media, the industry, that's what everyone is saying," Yao Jiancai said.

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "Don't listen to their crap. I'm going ahead with the original plan. Oh yeah, send me your address. I'll get the wedding invitation sent overnight. My wedding's on the

day after. Bring your wife and daughter too and let's have a good time."

Yao Jiancai rolled his eyes. "You're already having a good enough time!"

Zhang Ye laughed: "Haha, it'll be even better on the day of."

They hung up.

The third call arrived.

It was from the studio.

Ha Qiqi was panicking like mad. "Director Zhang, we're done for!"

"What are you talking about? I was just about to call you." Zhang Ye ordered: "Hurry up, can you bring our studio's staff over? It's time I needed some help from you guys!"

Ha Qiqi said: "Everyone?"

Zhang Ye affirmed: "Yes, gather everyone!"

Ha Qiqi gasped. "Are we going to fight Zhao Chipeng?"

Zhang Ye didn't know whether to laugh or cry: "Fight? I need you guys here to help me send the wedding invitations. I still have a lot of things to prepare over here, so hurry up and come over and help."

He received more than a dozen calls in a short period of time!

Zhang Xia.

Chen Guang.

Ning Lan.

Everyone was calling him.

It was just as well, since Zhang Ye was supposed to call them up anyway to tell them about the wedding!

Zhang Ye's composure left his friends in disbelief. The flames are

already licking at your eyebrows and there isn't much time left, so why are you still so calm?

Are you serious, Lord Zhang!

This is an industry-wide boycott we're talking about!

All of his friends were quite confused.

...

That the same night.

There was only a little more than a day left until Zhang Ye's wedding!

The media was still libeling him!

His foes were still denouncing him!

His industry peers continued to boycott him!

One by one, more and more insignificant people jumped on the bandwagon as unexpected celebrities and industry insiders came forward to denounce Zhang Ye!

The momentum was completely one-sided!

Their voices were too strong!

Nobody could restrain their excitement!

The scourge was finally going to be gotten rid of!

Many who had been bullied by Zhang Ye were in tears!

Many of them couldn't wait to celebrate the victory with a string of firecrackers!

They had been waiting far too long for this moment!

They had been waiting way too many years for this to happen!

And it was at this time that Zhang Ye's wedding invitations arrived at their designated destinations.

...

Old Chen's house.

The doorbell of the villa rang.

Chen Guang went to open the door. "Who is it?"

"I am Little Zhou from Zhang Ye's Studio. Hello, Teacher Chen."
A young man took out a wedding invitation and passed it to him.
"Teacher Zhang's big wedding will be held the day after tomorrow.
He sincerely invites you and your wife and hopes that you can be there."

Chen Guang nodded. "Alright, I understand."

The door closed.

Fan Wenli also came over. "The wedding invitation is here?"

Chen Guang gave a wry smile and said, "Zhang Ye sure is kind."

"Yeah," Fan Wenli said, "I thought that he would cancel the wedding."

The wedding invitation was very refined and beautiful.

When he flipped it open, written on it was: Groom: Zhang Ye.

Bride: Wu Zeqing.

sincerely invite you to grace us with your presence.

Chen Guang was stunned for a bit. "The bride is—Wu Zeqing?"

Fan Wenli was also startled. "Eh, why does this name sound a little familiar?"

"I find it familiar too. Which celebrity is it?" Chen Guang asked.

One second.

Two seconds.

All of a sudden!

Chen Guang jumped. "Fuck!"

Fan Wenli exclaimed, "Wu Zeqing? Which Wu Zeqing?"

Chen Guang said, "Could it be that Wu Zeqing?"

Fan Wenli started sweating. "Surely not! Th-This cannot be!"

...

At Old Yao's house.

The doorbell rang. His daughter, Yao Mi, went to answer the door.

When she returned, she said, "Dad, Mom, Uncle Zhang's wedding invite has arrived."

Old Wu's wife took it from her and had a look. She was stunned. "The bride is someone called Wu Zeqing? Who is it?"

Yao Mi was taken aback. "What did you say?"

Old Yao's wife pointed at the invitation in confusion. "The bride is Wu Zeqing."

Yao Jiancai, who was in the living room, was slack-jawed. "W-What did you say? Who is the bride?!"

"Did someone step on your tails? What is it?" Old Yao's wife was quite confused. She waggled the invitation. "It's written here that the bride's name is Wu Zeqing."

Yao Jiancai took a large step and came up to her. "Impossible! Let me see!"

Yao Mi also ran over in a frenzy!

When they flipped open the invitation, the bride's name stood out!

Yao Jiancai screamed, "What the!"

Yao Mi shrieked, "My God!"

Old Yao's wife still did not understand. "What does that mean? What's the matter?"

Yao Jiancai said in shock, "Don't you know who Wu Zeqing is?!"

...

At a newspaper firm.

Quite a few people were still working overtime.

"Are we still going to attend Zhang Ye's wedding?"

"The chief editor says there's no need to go anymore."

"Are we really not going?"

"Yes, the chief editor is really good friends with President Zhao. With the industry-wide boycott, we must reduce our coverage of Zhang Ye so that he will gradually disappear from the public eye."

"Oh, I see. I understand."

"Alright, it's time to knock off."

At this moment, an editor came stumbling in. "Quickly come and see this! Come and see this!"

Everyone was wondering what had happened.

"What is it?"

"Why are you running!"

"An invitation? They've sent Zhang Ye's wedding invitation?"

"Just leave it, we won't be going."

The editor shouted, "Speak after you've read the bride's name!"

They opened the invitation.

When everyone saw it, they were shocked out of their minds!

"Holy fuck!"

"Holy shit!"

"Fuck this!"

"Fuck!"

Everyone was dumbfounded!

"Something big has happened!"

"Quick, quick, quick, go and tell the chief editor!"

"Something big and terrible has happened!"

Someone stupidly asked, "So...do we still attend Zhang Ye's wedding on the day after tomorrow?"

Everyone instantly turned their heads and looked at that idiot like he was an idiot!

...

At Zhang Xia's house.

Her daughter came over. "Mom, it's the wedding invitation."

Zhang Xia sighed and took it from her. "Got it."

Her daughter asked, "Are you worried for Teacher Zhang?"

Zhang Xia said with a frown, "Yes, I am. I can't even help him out, so I feel really bad. Little Zhang is in big trouble this time!"

Zhang Xia flipped open the wedding invitation.

Then her eyes grew big as saucers. She dropped the wedding invitation onto the floor.

"Mom?"

"Yes."

"What's wrong?"

"Haha, it's nothing."

"Why are you laughing then? Weren't you just feeling worried for Teacher Zhang?"

"There's no need anymore."

"Why? Didn't he meet with some trouble?"

"It's someone else who has met with trouble now!"

"What do you mean?"

Her daughter picked up the invitation and read it. "The bride is Wu Zeqing? Who is that?"

Zhang Xia looked at her daughter. "This is someone who those people cannot afford to offend even if they team up." With a pause, she laughed and said, "Today's show business has got to be the most wonderful and exciting day since its inception!"

...

Feiyu Entertainment.

One of the companies which called for the industry-wide boycott.

A roar suddenly sounded from the president's office!

"Zhao Chipeng!"

"Zhao!"

"You motherfucker!"

The employees who were passing by outside all looked at one another!

What happened?

Why was President Zhou swearing at President Zhao?

Weren't the two of them tight business partners?

...

Xiaohai Media.

Another one of the companies which called for the industry-wide boycott.

"Zhao Chipeng!"

"You idiot!"

"You fucking idiot!"

"I've been fucking dragged down by you this time!"

...

Xiangtian Records.

Yet another one of the companies which called for the industry-wide boycott.

"Zhao Chipeng!"

"Fuck you!"

"Goddamn you!"

Chapter 1292: Zhao Chipeng in tears!

Tang Dazhang's home.

Several crosstalk actors who had gathered to celebrate Zhang Ye's impending departure from the entertainment circle looked terrified after receiving a call!

"Impossible!"

"This is impossible!"

"It must be a same name!"

"Right, it has to be someone with the same name!"

"Quick! Go and check what's going on!"

...

At the Writers' Association.

Meng Dongguo, who had had a great feud with Zhang Ye, posted another official denouncement of Zhang Ye and was feeling very satisfied as he prepared to knock off from work.

The door opened.

A colleague came in with a look of horror on his face. "The identity of Zhang Ye's wife has been revealed!"

Meng Dongguo sneered and said, "So what? What has that got to do with us? He won't be able to last a few more days anyway. Probably not even a day more."

His colleague swallowed hard.

Meng Dongguo asked curiously, "What's the matter?"

His colleague wiped away his sweat and said, "Zhang Ye's wife is called Wu Zeqing!"

With the news, Meng Dongguo plopped back down into his chair!

...

At A-list celebrity Jiang Hanwei's house.

Holding his phone, Jiang Hanwei's face turned green!

"What?"

"It's true!"

"Are you fucking kidding me?"

"Old Jiang, why would I joke with you!"

"This is impossible!"

...

At Xiaodong's house.

The three wedding invitations were lying on the table.

Amy was dumbfounded!

Xiaodong was dumbfounded!

Li Xiaoxian was dumbfounded!

"W-What is going on?"

"Zhang Ye is soaring to the skies!"

"This is such a huge joke!"

...

At Beijing Television.

Hu Fei was shocked!

Xiao Lu was astonished!

Hou Ge's hand was trembling!

Dafei nearly fell out of his seat!

All of them had received an individual invitation, and they almost went crazy after reading it!

"Oh, God!"

"Can someone tell me this isn't true?"

"If it's really true...then...then someone is going to look like an idiot!"

"Yes, Zhao Chipeng is going to end up as that idiot!"

...

The wedding invitation was exposed!

The invitation and its contents spread rapidly!

The groom was Zhang Ye, the bride was Wu Zeqing, and the wedding was going to be held at a famous hot spring resort in the suburbs of Beijing in the morning on the day after tomorrow. There was even a note at the bottom: Do not send or bring gifts.

For those who received the invitation, they immediately realized what was happening. For those who did not receive it, they soon found out from their friends. The entertainment circle was only so big, and there were only so many people in the industry. Everyone was connected to one another, so the news spread very quickly. This invitation from Zhang Ye had stunned the entire entertainment circle at this moment. Some people were so astonished that they were left trembling at the news, while others turned pale, were in shock, or were left with jaws dropped!

The literary field was shocked!

The crosstalk world was shocked!

The Go world was shocked!

The calligraphy world was shocked!

The education world was shocked!

It was an earthquake!

Show business was going to experience a shake-up!

Because they had encountered an unprecedented turn of events!

Because they had encountered a situation that they could not even begin to imagine!

Everyone turned their attention to Tianfang Entertainment!

...

And as the company in the middle of it all, all the ranks of Tianfang Entertainment, from top to bottom, were silenced!

When Zhao Chipeng and Tianfang Entertainment's upper management saw a picture of the invitation, every one of them was slack-jawed!

A vice president was so scared that his knees buckled under him!

A shareholder nearly fell out of their seat!

The president's secretary was livid!

The president, Zhao Chipeng, blanched!

"Why did it turn out like this?"

"How did things become like this!"

"We're done for!"

"This—"

"We're doomed!"

"President Zhao!"

"President Zhao, what do we do!"

"President Zhao, say something!"

"President Zhao!"

Everyone was panicking!

The calls were also coming in like crazy one after another!

Zhao Chipeng's cell phone never stopped ringing!

"Zhao! Fuck you!"

"Zhao Chipeng! You've screwed us over big time!"

"Old Zhao, you fucking set me up!"

"Zhao Chipeng, you stupid idiot! If you wanted to die, you should have just died alone! Why the hell did you have to drag us down with you! You even dared to order an industry-wide boycott on the husband of the SARFT's chief? Screw your sister! You've fucking killed us all!"

One!

Five!

Ten!

His cell phone was exploding with a flurry of calls!

Each and every one of his old friends and business partners was cursing and swearing at him without end!

It had always been the SARFT that would issue a ban on them!

It had always been the SARFT that would give them trouble!

It had always been the SARFT that would stop their television series from broadcasting, or stop their films from getting a release, or not approve of their activities!

But today?

The situation was actually reversed!

They were going to boycott the SARFT's chief's husband?

At this moment, they felt like they were the boldest idiots in the world!

Zhao Chipeng was forced to answer the calls and listen to the callers rant before hanging up in shock. Then he would answer the calls again in a mechanical fashion before hanging up again. Throughout this, he did not say a word!

His legs turned to jelly!

He was perspiring as beads sweat kept rolling off his head!

"President Zhao!"

"President Zhao!"

The company's upper management had lost their backbone!

Zhao Chipeng looked at them and finally opened his mouth to say something. "So what if she is the SARFT's leader?"

What?

The upper management was stunned as their eyes filled with admiration!

Zhao Chipeng said again, "So what if it's Chief Wu?"

What are you planning?

The upper management was shocked again as they appeared moved by his words!

Zhao Chipeng said loudly, "So what if he is Chief Wu's husband?"

That's right!

So what if it's them!

Can they bully others in such a way just because she is from the SARFT?

Can they repress them just because she is the chief of the SARFT?

All of them were touched to their cores by Zhao Chipeng's spirit. They were fascinated by him and felt that their President Zhao was very impressive. He was even a role model to them!

Zhao Chipeng raged on indignantly, "So what if Zhang Ye and Chief Wu are getting married? Can she do whatever she wants just because she is in a leadership role? Does being a leader make her any different from anyone else?" He was so angry that his lips were trembling. This roused everyone who saw him behaving like this. He suddenly said, "Can she decline to take any gifts for her wedding just because she is a leader?"

Everyone was stunned!

Zhao Chipeng said angrily, "How can she do that! Just look at this

invitation. Just look at what they wrote on this invitation. This is really pissin' me off! They are totally disrespecting our traditional Chinese culture! Chief Wu is being too clean-fingered(1.Incorruptible, turning down gifts due to an official position) this way, she's being too careful about it! But she can't allow there be an example of this happening, can she? Otherwise, how will the others deal with such acts in the future? Right? How will they know how to handle such situations? A leader getting married is essentially the same as the average person getting married! There shouldn't be anything special about it!"

Everyone was pretty dumbfounded!

A vice president stared wide-eyed. "Ah?"

A supervisor: "Ah?"

A secretary: "Ah?"

When Zhao Chipeng saw that no one made any move after what he said, he got furious and quickly shouted, "What are you all ah-ing for! What are you all doing still standing there! Hurry up! Quickly prepare a huge gift so that we can send it to Chief Wu for her wedding! Do you people need me to fucking spell it out?"

Everyone said, "Ah?"

"Go quickly! Fuck!"

"Under...understood!"

Everyone nearly fainted at that!

The invitation letter explicitly stating that there shouldn't be any gifting?

So you were actually angry about this?!

Everyone rushed out of the room!

PR!

Relying on social ties!

Finding a way!

Preparing the gift!

Tianfang Entertainment was in chaos!

Zhao Chipeng silently sat by himself at his desk for a long time.
His nose tingled and his eyes suddenly welled up with tears!

This had turned into something big!

This had really turned into something big this time!

Chapter 1293: The SARFT's son-in-law!

This night was destined to not be a quiet one.

In fact, it was going to be a very long night.

An invitation had set off a storm in the entertainment industry. Tianfang Entertainment bore the brunt of it as they got pushed to the forefront. They were undoubtedly in the most trouble as the entire company frantically tried to remedy things. But everyone else knew that their actions were too little, too late. That industry-wide boycott order had instantly become the biggest joke in the industry—one that could keep being repeated for a lifetime and still get a laugh.

How could it be like this!

Hasn't this fellow always been butting heads with the SARFT?

Didn't this fellow used to fight the SARFT?

Didn't this fellow get banned by the SARFT on more than one occasion?

This was the worst hooligan of the entertainment circle and the greatest thorn in the industry. This bastard who had offended almost all the people in the business had suddenly become the son-in-law of the SARFT?

"President Zhao, it's not going to work out!"

"The PR isn't going to help against this fallout!"

"The leader that I know over there is not answering my calls!"

"We can't get in contact with Chief Liu either!"

"President Zhao, no one wants to deal with us right now, and we can't send the gift either!"

"Please make a quick decision!"

"President Zhao, the shareholders have requested a board

meeting!"

"President Zhao, the celebrities under our management are all panicking, please decide how we should deal with this!"

Zhao Chipeng's face paled as he listened to his subordinates' reports. Finally, he picked up his phone and called one of the executives at the SARFT who he was on good terms with.

Du du du.

It went through, but no one answered.

Zhao Chipeng tried calling again.

After two rings, it was cut off.

Zhao Chipeng was sweating by now. He made a third call before someone finally answered. "Chief Wang!"

"What is it, Old Zhao? I was sleeping. Let's talk tomorrow if there's something."

"Chief Wang, you've got to help a brother out!"

"Help you? How am I supposed to help!"

"About Chief Wu and Zhang Ye, that's simply—"

"I also received the invitation just today."

"This is really too sudden. If I had known that he was together with Chief Wu, would I have been so crazy to pick a fight with him? Chief Wang, you've got to give me some support. We're really out of ideas. What's the situation with Chief Wu? Did Chief Wu mention anything?"

"Chief Wu didn't say anything at all."

"Phew, that's good then."

"Good? Are you really dumb or just playing dumb? Just look at what you've done. What is this? Disregarding Zhang Ye's status and just basing it on Han Di's matter alone, who doesn't know what actually happened. Do you think the public is blind to what

really happened? Do you think that the SARFT does not know what went on? But look at what you did. You've committed a wrong and still pushed the blame onto Han Di. You even tried to force him into a corner? When Zhang Ye came forward to say something, you still coerced your colleagues to spare him no rest? Old Zhao, you've become too pompous!"

"I've done wrong! I'll admit it!"

"Handle your own problems then."

"Chief Wang!"

"Let's end the call here. Don't contact me anymore in the future."

The current Zhao Chipeng was like an unimportant and smelly piece of dog shit on the street. Anyone who saw him would avoid him.

Elsewhere.

The board meeting was convened.

When Zhao Chipeng came in, all the other board of directors were present. There was a very heavy and serious atmosphere in the air. Everyone had stifled expression on their faces.

A director said, "Old Zhao, there are only two paths we can take now."

An elderly director said, "One, you take this all on yourself. Two, you bring the company down with you. You may decide how you want it to be."

"This problem was caused by you in the first place. Those other media companies might still have a chance of making things right, but that isn't the case for us."

"Chipeng, why don't you take a back seat."

...

Online.

The people were still heatedly discussing the issue.

"What will happen in the future?"

"Who knows what they'll do to Zhang Ye?"

"Hai, is Teacher Zhang really done for?"

"The industry-wide boycott has already been ordered. The same events from seven years ago are happening all over again!"

"It's difficult to bring up the things that happened in the past, since many of the things that Zhang Ye did were rather controversial. But there's definitely no fault with Zhang Ye regarding this issue!"

No one wanted to see Zhang Ye leave show business. There was only one such person like him, so it wasn't simply a matter of having one less person like him around. If he were to go, there wouldn't be another like him!

All of a sudden, someone shouted in bewilderment: "Eh, look at that!"

"What is it?"

"Tang Dazhang's Weibo post has been deleted!"

"Ah? He really did do so!"

"That post denouncing Zhang Ye has been deleted by him?"

"Eh, another crosstalk comedian has deleted their post too!"

"What are these people up to?"

"Who knows, maybe they got hacked?"

"Fuck! Quickly come and see this! Everything has been deleted! They've all deleted their posts!"

"Everyone did?"

"Yes, all of them!"

The people were very surprised!

Everyone?

How was that possible!

They went to check through all those Weibo accounts in disbelief and were dumbfounded!

The crosstalk world!

The literary field!

The calligraphy world!

The education world!

The entertainment circle!

All of the Weibo posts from those who had censured Zhang Ye had disappeared completely at this moment!

Then the netizens noticed an even more shocking thing happening!

Beijing Crosstalk Association's official Weibo: "Congratulations on Teacher Zhang's big wedding. May your love last forever!"

Beijing Writer's Association: "May you both be blessed with a child soon, sending our congratulations!"

A-list celebrity Jiang Hanwei: "Congratulations."

The studio of the B-list celebrity, Li Yu: "Best wishes."

Crosstalk actor Tang Dazhang's Weibo: "May your love last fore."

Feiyu Entertainment's official Weibo: "Congratulations and felicitations! May you both have what your hearts desire!"

Xiangtian Records' official Weibo: "A match made in heaven! Great auspiciousness to the newlyweds!"

Even Tianfang Entertainment posted on Weibo. "No words can fully express our congratulations! Today is an exciting and momentous day! Wishing Mr. Zhang and Mrs. Wu a happy marriage!"

The netizens were dumbfounded!

Everyone looked like they had fucking seen a ghost!

"What's going on?"

"Congratulations on the big wedding? Weren't you people just scolding Teacher Zhang a while ago?!"

"Damn, did these people have too much to drink?"

"What are they doing?"

"God knows what madness has come over them!"

"Tianfang Entertainment also made a Weibo post? And they mentioned something about having no words? No words, your sister! Exciting? Exciting, my ass! Didn't you people order the industry-wide boycott? Weren't you all bent on sparing Teacher Zhang no rest? So how can you be excited!"

"Are these idiots having a fit?"

"A mass hacking?"

There were those who gave a speech!

There were those who offered their congratulations!

There were those who Liked the post!

All everyone could see were countless familiar faces appearing below the Weibo post Zhang Ye used to announce his wedding. A great deal of them were those who had denounced him earlier, and some others were people like the entertainment industry's artists and personnel who had remained quiet all this time. At this moment, all of them were appearing like cabbages being sold in the market. Some of the celebrities were even unheard of and were really just small-timers in the industry. Of course, there were also many big names who showed up to offer their congratulations!

Zhang Ye's fans were dumbfounded!

Han Di's fans were dumbfounded!

The people were simply unprepared for this happening!

This change was too sudden. Do you people have any integrity left!

And what came later was an even more astonishing event!

"Tianfang Entertainment's President Zhao Chipeng announces his resignation as president!"

"Zhao Chipeng steps down from his position!"

"Tianfang Entertainment takes the initiative in terminating Han Di's contract!"

"Han Di becomes a free agent!"

"Zhao Chipeng apologizes to Han Di over Weibo!"

"The truth is out, Han Di cleared of all grievances!"

The news headlines came one after another!

The people were crazy anxious now.

"What just happened?"

"They just issued the industry-wide boycott this morning but have already given up on it by this afternoon? What kind of a joke is this?"

"Something bad must have happened!"

"I know, but what?"

This farce continued for quite a while!

By the end of it all, Zhang Ye's wedding invitation was leaked!

When the people saw this, everyone very nearly passed out when they realized what was going on!

"The bride is Wu Zeqing?"

"Chief Wu from the SARFT?"

"How's that possible!"

"What the hell is with this turn of events?"

"Holy fuck!"

"Holy fuck!"

"Holy fuck +10,000!"

The netizens blew up at this!

The public was stunned!

Zhang Ye had become the SARFT's son-in-law?

Chapter 1294: At the venue of the wedding ceremony!

The next day.

A day before the wedding ceremony was to take place.

The outside world was still causing an uproar!

The people were still in shock over the revelation!

This news had come too suddenly for the entertainment industry. It was too earth-shattering. Immediately, everyone in the country, including the media, turned their attention to Zhang Ye and his wedding. Until they could see it with their own eyes or hear it with their own ears, many of them refused accept this truth!

On the highway.

Zhang Ye and Wu Zeqing, together with their families, were heading to the hot spring resort. The hotel over there had been cleared out, and it was the final day of the preparations. There was still a lot to get done, and the stage had to be set up as well. There was also a rehearsal that they needed to do, so it was a really busy day for them. The staff from Zhang Ye's Studio had already come down in advance to set the place up.

In the sedan.

Zhang Ye was making quite a few calls.

...

"Little Zhou, is the Chinese Kwa ready for collection yet?"

"They said that they should be able to get it completed by today."

"Don't just leave it at that, we need it tomorrow."

"Alright, I'll go and hurry them up."

"Bring it back before the afternoon."

"Understood, Director Zhang."

...

"Director Zhang, the reporters are in a frenzy. The main entrance to the resort has been totally blocked off!"

"What? How many of them are there?"

"There are over a hundred reporters from more than thirty different media outlets!"

"Hold them off for now. Don't let anyone get in and let them know that we will not be giving any interviews!"

"OK, we're coordinating with the resort's security."

"We'll be arriving very soon."

"Drive in through the rear entrance. I'll be waiting over there."

"Alright."

...

"Director Zhang, the representatives from the endorsement companies have arrived."

"OK, I got it."

"So what do we do with them?"

"Host them for now. We'll talk about the rest when I get there."

...

The call ended.

Zhang Ye's voice had gone hoarse from talking so much.

Seated next to him, Wu Zeqing handed him a bottle of water.

Zhang Ye's mother asked, "What was that about endorsement companies?"

Zhang Ye said pretentiously, "I was just going to talk about this."

Well, I'm getting married, aren't I? As such, those brand names that I'm endorsing have all come looking for me. They're hoping that they can make use of the wedding ceremony to give their products some exposure. Heh, isn't that causing trouble? It's my big day and I'm expected to advertise for them? I'll chase them all away the moment we get there! This is so infuriating!"

His father smacked his lips and said, "Why are you chasing people away on your wedding day?"

Zhang Ye said firmly, "I have to! I must chase them all away!"

Li Qinqin smiled and said, "Little Ye, what's there to get angry about?"

Wu Changhe added, "It's no big deal displaying a few of their products. Aren't you their spokesperson?"

Zhang Ye said in anger, "But how can we allow that?"

Wu Zeqing said, "Just let them do it, it's only a minor thing."

I can't, Old Wu." Zhang Ye shook his head.

Li Qinqin spoke, "There's nothing wrong with that, Little Ye. Let me have the final say on this matter. Other celebrities also take care of the brands they endorse at their weddings. Those companies have all invested so much money and given so much advertisement exposure to you. The endorsement fees they paid you are also top in the industry, aren't they? Therefore, you cannot let them miss out on something like that. How can you even think of chasing them away? Surely that wouldn't look good on you, right? Isn't it just having a few small product placements at the wedding? I'll decide on it then, just let them do it."

Zhang Ye blinked. "Is that really fine?"

Li Qinqin said, "Yes, it's no big deal."

"Alright then, I'll listen to you." Zhang Ye had no choice but to agree with her.

Up ahead.

They finally arrived at the hot spring resort.

When the car pulled into the hotel, everyone who got out of the car was dumbfounded!

Toothpaste!

Jewelry!

Mineral water!

Milk!

Soap!

The reading app!

Sanitary ware!

People from over a dozen of Zhang Ye's endorsed brands crowded together!

Behind them, all kinds of advertising placards and signs, including an advertising inflatable, had been put up!

"You're finally here!"

"Teacher Zhang!"

"Teacher Zhang, where should we place these?"

"Please help us find a spot!"

Chattering came from every direction.

His mother was stunned. "Little Ye, why are there so many of them!"

Zhang Ye gave a sheepish smile and said, "I'm endorsing quite a few brands."

His father stared at him. "But this is too many!"

Li Qinqin and Wu Changhe were also startled and were slow to react!

Zhang Ye went forward and started ordering them around. "Everyone, please line up, and don't be in a rush. Just calm down and listen to what I have to say. Those who are from Family Spring, please put your advertising placard up at Zone A where the reporters will be entering. I will be arranging for manpower to ensure that every reporter and celebrity attending the ceremony tomorrow will get a bottle of your water in their hands. You will be the designated brand of water at the venue!"

The people from Family Spring said, "Thank you, Teacher Zhang!"

Zhang Ye shouted, "What about the milk? Where's the dairy manufacturer?"

A few of the dairy employees hollered back, "We're here, we're here!"

Zhang Ye pointed at them. "Good, you guys are also one of the designated drinks. Did you bring along your ad placard today? Good, place it over here. Right, secure it properly. It might get windy tomorrow."

Installation.

Inflation.

Within a short span of 20 minutes.

The reception area was almost filled up with advertisements. There were even some that could not be placed due to a lack of space. The entire area looked quite lively!

Zhang Ye's mother called out, "Enough! Don't place any more things here!"

A distance away, Zhang Ye told some workers, "There's still some space, try to squeeze a few more in!"

His mother got mad and went up to Zhang Ye and gave him a beating!

Zhang Ye turned tail and ran away. "Aiyo, Mom! What are you

doing!"

"Watch how I'll kill you!" His mother was incensed!

Wu Zeqing just stood there and laughed.

Li Qinqin and Wu Changhe hurriedly went over to pull her back.

"In-law!"

"Aiyo, In-law, don't hit him anymore!"

"The media is out there watching!"

Finally, Wu Mo and Fat Sis arrived!

When Wu Mo saw the place, he exclaimed, "Ah? Everything has been arranged already?" He turned around and got his workers to unload the vehicle. "Hurry, hurry! Get everything down from the vehicle and quickly set it up!"

Fat Sis was also getting her people to unload their items.

Li Qinqin was stunned. "Why are you two here as well?"

Fat Sis said, "To put up the advertisements for my new game, of course."

Wu Mo followed up with, "Teacher Zhang is the spokesperson for our Brain Gold Company. Since he's getting married to my aunt, it would be wrong if I don't advertise a little to make sure that the millions in endorsement fees are well spent."

Li Qinqin said, "B-But there's no space anymore!"

Wu Mo looked around and finally pointed at the main stage. "That's my spot!"

Wu Changhe very nearly beat someone up as well. "That's where the bride and groom will be standing!"

Wu Mo blinked and said, "They can just stand nearer the front. My placard can be placed behind them."

Fat Sis came over to snatch the spot. "Get lost, this is my spot!"

"Aunt! I found this spot first!" Wu Mo said in panic!

Fat Sis and Wu Mo nearly came to blows!

Zhang Ye quickly came over to break them apart. He came up with a bad idea and said, "Mo'er, just pass some Brain Gold to Uncle. When he arrives and make his entrance, the media will surely turn their attention to him. Once the cameras are all focused on him, just get Uncle to drink some Brain Gold to boost his spirit before entering. That'll ensure that the entire process will get recorded!"

Wu Mo said excitedly, "Right, right! That's a good idea!"

Wu Changhe nearly vomited a mouthful of blood. "You want me to drink that? Your sister! What would I have to boost my spirit for!" Wu Changhe went up wanting to hit him. "Get over here!"

Zhang Ye turned and ran. "You guys discuss it amongst yourselves!"

Li Qinqin said to Wu Zeqing, "Daughter, hurry up and give him a talking to!"

But Wu Zeqing couldn't care less. She just smiled and said, "This is the reception, not where the wedding ceremony will be held, so just let him handle it. It does look pretty good, doesn't it?"

"What do you see here that makes you say that it looks good?" Li Qinqin was at her wits' end.

An hour later.

The setup was complete.

Everyone felt rather confused when they saw the place!

Was this the reception area of a wedding ceremony?

Why did it look more like a trade fair!

Chapter 1295: The big wedding (Beginning)

On the day of the wedding.

In the morning, in the Beijing suburbs.

At the hot spring resort.

Today was Zhang Ye's wedding day, and all the big local media outlets had sent their representatives here. It still wasn't time to enter yet, as over 100 reporters stood in a long snaking line outside the resort. They were all waiting to be admitted so that they could get a good spot the moment they got in. The reporters' vehicles were parked together, and there were sightings of the media everywhere. Several television stations were even doing a live coverage of the event from outside the resort.

Before long, it was almost time.

The reporters were going to get admitted into the venue with the invitations in their hands.

"Hey, don't squeeze!"

"Aiyo, slow down a little!"

"Who stepped on me?"

"Motherfucker, are you rushing to reincarnate?!"

"Aren't you rushing as well!"

"It's my business that I'm rushing, what does it have anything to do with you!"

When the doors were opened, a large number of reporters flocked into the venue. None of them were walking, as everyone ran straight for the open-air garden of the hot spring resort where the reception area was situated! The invitation that Zhang Ye's Studio had sent out to the media was different from other guests'. It included some details like requests for the media outlets' representatives to arrive before a certain time, the location of their

activity area, and a list of barred items. It was written very clearly on the invitation that the reporters could freely take photographs from their activity area during the reception. But for the official Chinese-style wedding ceremony that would be taking place afterwards, none of the reporters would be allowed in the venue. This meant that the reception during the first part of the wedding was just for show to let the public know about it and to account to the media. The actual wedding ceremony would not be witnessed by any media and only the bride and groom's close friends and relatives would be allowed to attend.

In the open-air garden.

Many of the reporters were dumbfounded by what they saw the moment they arrived!

"Ah?"

"What the heck!"

"W-Why are there so many advertisements out here?"

"Is this a trade fair!"

"How are we supposed to avoid framing all of that in our pictures!"

"Pfft!"

"Zhang Ye, that joker!"

"Only he can come up with so many surprises!"

"That's right! That fellow is always able to come up with things that nobody expects!"

"How maddening! Isn't this as good as telling us that if we want to get firsthand news of his wedding to report about, we have to advertise the brands that he is endorsing as well? There are so many advertisements around that we won't be able to avoid capturing them when we take photos or videos of the wedding, yet he is not allowing us to join in for the actual ceremony. He just

wants to make us do all the hard work and not be able to enjoy the fruits of our labor? Your sister! This is the first time I've seen such an immoral celebrity! He's really making full use of the media this way! Zhang Ye hardly ever gave interviews in the past, so I was wondering why he was so generous this time!"

"Did you think that this fellow's behavior was only like this recently?"

"You're still inexperienced and don't yet understand Zhang Ye well enough, hur hur. When you get to know him better, you'll learn that there are only things that you wouldn't expect, and nothing that he wouldn't be capable of doing. This fellow is the most unique oddity of the entertainment circle. Everything that he does will surely be different from others' actions. If you even start to measure him with common sense, you'll have already lost the game!"

"Enough talking, let's hurry and get a good spot. Even if his intentions are to plaster all our photos and videos with those advertisements, we still have to do our job. If we don't, how will we answer to our bosses when we get back?"

"That's right, the guests should be arriving soon!"

From this moment on, the wedding officially began.

The reporters on the inside were guided by staffers from Zhang Ye's Studio, while Wu Zeqing's secretary, Bai Li, was in charge of overseeing the outside entrance where the guests were welcomed. The entrance was very important, and a lot of candidates had been considered to take charge of it. In the end, none of them got chosen. No matter how they considered it, Secretary Bai was still the most suitable candidate of all. She was familiar with those from the entertainment industry since she had dealt with them before, while she also knew those from the SARFT. As such, whether it was Zhang Ye or Wu Zeqing's friends and relatives, she basically knew them all.

Outside.

At the entrance.

Secretary Bai was holding the fort.

Chen Guang arrived together with his wife, Fan Wenli.

Fan Wenli smiled and said, "Secretary Bai?"

They had heard of Secretary Bai's name long before today. It was not only because she was Wu Zeqing's secretary at the SARFT, but also because she came from a rather important background. Her father was the head of one of the provincial television stations.

Secretary Bai smiled and welcomed them. "Teacher Chen, Teacher Fan, you've arrived? Please head inside. There will be someone to receive you in there."

After passing her, Chen Guang whispered, "We'd better not try anything funny today."

Fan Wenli laughed and said, "I know."

Chen Guang said in regret, "Back then, I thought that we would be able to enjoy ourselves and have a lot of fun when Zhang Ye got married. But now that it turns out that he's marrying Chief Wu, there's no chance of that anymore!"

Fan Wenli giggled, "Pfft."

A large group made up of over a dozen people arrived and walked over.

Peking University's Dean Pan Yang of the School of Mathematical Sciences was leading the way.

Peking University's Dean Chang Kaige of the Chinese Department was beside him, along with Su Na and the rest of the Chinese Department following them.

Secretary Bai smiled and went up to them in greeting. "You all must be friends from Peking University, right? Welcome,

welcome. Quick, please go inside."

Pan Yang said in surprise, "Oh, Secretary Bai knows us?"

Secretary Bai gave a congenial smile and said, "Of course. You're all Teacher Zhang's colleagues and friends, as well as Chief Wu's family."

This was rather true. Wu Zeqing used to be a vice president at Peking University, so to claim that they were her family was not wrong at all.

The group of them entered the building.

Pan Yang smiled and said, "This is quite a spectacle."

Chang Kaige said happily, "But of course! The bride has a rather special status after all."

Su Na marveled, "Professor Zhang has really done it this time!"

Professor Zeng said, "More than that! He's gone to Heaven this time!"

Out of nowhere, two people arrived at the entrance.

Secretary Bai's eyes narrowed as she put out her hand to stop them. "Please produce your invitations."

Those two people had wanted to sneak their way in but ended up utterly embarrassed.

The man gave a sheepish smile as he said, "Secretary Bai, I'm Old Sun."

Secretary Bai looked at him. "Oh, it's President Sun."

The two were from one of the companies that had called for the industry-wide boycott, Xiangtian Records, and were the vice president and his wife. They even brought along a gift, though no one knew what it contained.

President Sun hurriedly said, "We came specially to offer our congratulations to Chief Wu and Teacher Zhang on their wedding.

This is a gift that we prepared; it's just something small to show our sincerity. We—"

"Please take it back," interrupted Secretary Bai. "We are not accepting any gifts."

President Sun's outreached hand froze in midair. "Alright, we'll take back the gift. So can we..."

They were just about to shamelessly make their way in when Secretary Bai blocked them off with her arm. "You can go back as well."

The two of them could do nothing and had to leave dejectedly.

Then another entertainment company's representative arrived.

"Secretary Bai."

"Please leave."

"About Chief Wu..."

"Please leave."

Secretary Bai stopped another person from entering. She did not allow anyone who had no invitation to take a step in.

They all knew Secretary Bai and the background that she came from, so no one dared to flip out against her and could only walk away with a wry smile. They had wanted to use the wedding day to ease the relationship tension and express their companies' attitudes, but they never expected they would meet with such a setback even before they could get in. However, they were not frustrated by this nor the least bit angry. There was no choice, after all, since they were the ones who came out calling for Zhang Ye's head just two days ago with that industry-wide boycott order of theirs. The main issue was that they were being totally unreasonable about that matter in the first place. They had been having things their way for too long and were too arrogant, so when they learned that an artist actually dared to be defiant

against their funders, they immediately responded to Zhao Chipeng's call for an industry-wide boycott of Zhang Ye. But to their complete surprise, they met with someone who was even more powerful than them and tripped all over themselves!

Therefore, how could they dare to still be angry?

It was already a very nice gesture that they didn't get kicked out by the bride's people!

Around them, quite a few reporters and people in show business spotted this. Every one of them could only give each other a look and then pretend they didn't notice it. But in their hearts, they were already drawing in a cold breath.

President Sun?

Boss Qi?

President Chi?

President Jia?

Which of them were not big shots of the entertainment industry?

Which of them could not summon the wind and the rain in the entertainment industry?

But as it stood? These people couldn't even get past the door?

If something like this had happened at any other celebrity's wedding, it would simply be unimaginable. By coming to attend your wedding, it meant that they were giving you face. Even if they didn't have a wedding invitation, they wouldn't have been chased away like this. However, anyone could understand that Zhang Ye's wedding was different, because this wasn't any ordinary celebrity wedding!

It wasn't the groom that was extraordinary!

But that the bride was someone too important!

If a person were observant, they would notice that the entrance

was starting to fill up with an increasing number of flower baskets. For some of the guests who just arrived, they would be stunned by the sight of these flower baskets. This was because the two rows of flower baskets stretched for more than 300 meters. Later on, they even ran out of space and could only stack them up behind the entrance. This was as good as a sea of flowers, and anyone who saw it would surely jump back in fright!

There were more than 3,000 flower baskets!

Who had ever seen something like that before?

No one would have ever fucking seen something like that!

And if you were to check the names of those who sent them, they would all be quite recognizable!

Tang Dazhang!

Li Yu!

Jiang Hanwei!

Zhang Yuanqi!

Dong Shanshan!

Zhang Xia!

Tianfang Entertainment!

Purple Light Entertainment!

XX Entertainment!

XX Media!

XX Records!

Honestly, the guests who were invited to Zhang Ye's wedding did not number that many. Any B-or C-list celebrity's wedding could easily have guests that outnumbered those who were here today. This was because at the level of a B-list celebrity, one's social network would already be very broad. Celebrity friends they were familiar with or had worked with before would number at least

fifty, if not a hundred. But it was slightly different for Zhang Ye and Wu Zeqing. Due to Old Wu's status, she did not have that many friends or colleagues. Meanwhile, Zhang Ye's temper had led him to offend many, many people. As such, he had even fewer friends than Wu Zeqing. So the number of guests invited to their wedding was not that many either.

And yet, the flower baskets that had been sent over numbered so many more than any celebrity wedding had received!

About eight or nine years ago, an A-list celebrity invited over a quarter of the entertainment circle's people to their wedding, and that was a spectacular sight to see. At that time, it had shocked the media and citizens!

But today!

For Zhang Ye's big wedding!

They received flower baskets from almost the entire entertainment industry!

This spectacle was never before seen, nor would it be seen again in the future!

Chapter 1296: The big wedding (Middle)

In the open-air garden.

At the wedding venue.

The media was already in position.

The relatives of the bride and groom had also arrived. They had all been ushered into the venue in advance, while the celebrity guests were required to walk the red carpet for the reporters to take pictures. Because of that, they were all held in the waiting area and would enter the venue one by one. As for Zhang Ye's colleagues from Peking University and Media College, this wasn't required of them as no one would know who they were even if they walked the red carpet, nor would there be any reporters taking pictures of them. As a result, all of them were brought in by the staff of Zhang Ye's Studio the moment they arrived.

At this moment, there were only two celebrities inside the venue.

One of them was Beijing Television's Dong Shanshan.

The other one was Central TV Sports Channel's Yu Yingyi.

Both of Zhang Ye's old classmates had been asked to be the emcees of his wedding.

Dong Shanshan was holding a microphone and standing at the innermost area of the red carpet. She looked at the cordoned off reporters on both sides of the red carpet and said with a smile, "Dear friends of the media, distinguished guests, friends and relatives, good morning. Today is a day worth remembering as it is the day that my old classmate takes a step into married life."

Yu Yingyi brought up her microphone and said with a smile, "We were classmates with Zhang Ye in university for many years and also colleagues of his, as well as really good friends too. When he invited us to host his wedding, we refused him at first. Shanshan and I are both still single while he's already going to be married.

Do you think we will not be affected by that?"

Wang He.

Hu Feifei.

Old Wang.

Their group of old classmates clamored, "Of course we're affected!"

Everyone laughed.

Not far away on the red carpet, Zhang Ye could be heard shouting, "Hey, hurry up and don't say those useless things. I've been waiting forever!"

The reporters also laughed.

Yu Yingyi said, "See, the groom is already getting nervous."

Dong Shanshan said loudly while laughing, "So then, let us welcome today's most handsome, most charming, and most enviable groom, Zhang Ye!"

Cheers sounded from all around!

Applause thundered!

The reporters were immediately excited as they aimed their cameras!

Zhang Ye, who was wearing a tuxedo, walked in via the red carpet.

The reporters shouted.

"Slow down!"

"Teacher Zhang, please walk slowly!"

"Turn around for us!"

"Look over here!"

"Go even slower than that!"

"Teacher Zhang, please wave to us!"

"Aiyo, that awful toothpaste ad is too glaring!"

"Can someone go and take away that Brain Gold ad!"

Kacha, kacha. The lenses all zoomed in at him!

Zhang Ye was quite cooperative and allowed the reporters to get as many pictures as they wanted.

When he reached the inside of the venue, Zhang Ye relaxed and went to greet his friends and relatives.

Fang Weihong came over. "Teacher Zhang, congratulations!"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Sister Fang, Sister Zhang isn't here?"

Fang Weihong said, "Sister Zhang is filming overseas over the course these days and couldn't make it today. But she still got me to come over to congratulate you."

Zhang Ye said, "Alright then, feel free to have a seat anywhere you like. Please forgive me if I didn't take good care of you."

Fang Weihong smiled and said, "Go on and handle whatever you need to."

Several of his old classmates came over.

Wang He greeted, "Zhang'er!"

Hu Feifei fumed, "You're not much of a friend!"

Old Wang belly laughed. "Yeah, you hid the secret too well!"

Xiaoqian said, "You don't know this, but when we heard the news of your wedding, we fell to the ground. You're so impressive in getting Chief Wu marry you!"

Zhang Ye grinned. "Hai, it's nothing much."

Wang He laughed and said, "Will there be any crashing of the bridal chamber since this is a Chinese ceremony?"

"Of course." Zhang Ye said happily, "Crash it all you want."

Xiaoqian rolled her eyes. "Get lost!"

Hu Feifei burst out laughing. "Out of everyone who is here today, who would try to crash your bridal chamber? Alright, you don't have to stand around to entertain us. Go do what you have to and take care of those people from the SARFT. We're all your friends, so it doesn't really matter to us."

Zhang Ye said, "Alright, I'll go over to them first then. The official ceremony won't be taking place here. There won't be any reporters either and it'll only be us, so let's talk again later."

Over at the SARFT's group.

Old Wu's colleagues and subordinates were all having something to drink. There was a catered buffet, and it consisted of both Chinese and Western food. There were also red and white wines available, with nothing missing. But it was obviously a little quieter here. The rest of the guests mostly knew each other as they came from the same industry. All of them could make small talk upon meeting each other. However, the guests from the SARFT were a little lonelier. At this place, there weren't too many people who could really chat with them. After all, the SARFT as an overseeing authority in the entertainment industry made their roles very special. To mention those who were usually in contact with them, they were usually people from entertainment companies, as well as some executives of the television stations. But if you were talking about the celebrities in show business? There really weren't any opportunities for them to speak directly with the SARFT. Their fields were too different, and they had nothing in common to talk about!

However, it was different now!

Today, a celebrity from the entertainment industry was finally able to speak directly with the SARFT!

Zhang Ye went over to them and said, "Everyone, sorry for not hosting well."

A chief quickly said, "Mr. Zhang, you're too polite`."

A division head said, "Mr. Zhang, congratulations to you!"

Another division head said, "Congratulations on your wedding. May you be blessed with a child soon!"

Zhang Ye said, "Thank you!"

Instead, it was the group of people from the SARFT who were feeling a little excluded and somewhat embarrassed. They had also had quite a rivalry with Zhang Ye. It wasn't anything official, but there was a lot of behind-the-scenes fighting that took place. For example, the banned artists of which Zhang Ye was part of, and an earlier instance where Zhang Ye was listed on the SARFT's blacklist and was identified as the top target. Still, in the end, Zhang Ye became their leader's husband just like that. They didn't know whether to laugh or cry. They didn't really know how they should interact with him. But since he was their leader's husband, they might as well just address him as "Mr. Zhang." It wouldn't be wrong to be more polite to him in any case.

His three sisters were also here!

His eldest younger sister said, "Brother!"

His second sister asked anxiously, "Where are the celebrities? Where are they?"

Zhang Ye went over and said, "They're all at the back and will be here soon."

His third sister blinked and said, "Can we freely ask for autographs and photos with them?"

Zhang Ye laughed. "Of course, please ask them all you want. If they don't give in to your requests, come and look for me!"

"Long live our brother!" his third sister said very excitedly!

Zhang Ye looked into the distance and called out, "Chenchen, stop running around!"

Chenchen was over at the buffet chomping down on food. She said with her mouth full, "OK."

Zhang Ye asked, "Where's your aunt?"

Chenchen gestured with her chin. "Handling the reporters."

As Zhang Ye's agent, Rao Aimin did not have it easy today.

Turning around, he saw his friends from the Ministry of Public Security's Internet Surveillance Bureau arriving!

Fan Yingyun was walking at the front. "Teacher Zhang, congratulations!"

Dong Zhiqiang.

Fang Xiaoshui.

Meng Yi.

They were all colleagues of Zhang Ye's when he was attached to the Internet Surveillance Bureau. They took part in the Sino-Korean hacking war together, but of course, they did not know that Zhang Ye had taken part in it.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Sister Fan, Director Dong, Little Fang, I thought you guys wouldn't be coming."

Fan Yingyun flicked her hair and said, "How can we not come to your wedding? We would throw aside all our work just to be here!"

Awhile after greeting them, Zhang Ye pulled Fan Yingyun aside. "I was just looking for you. Come, come." He then shouted across the room. "Sister Ha, Brother Zuo!"

When Ha Qiqi and Zhang Zuo heard him, they ran over.

"Director Zhang?"

"What's the matter?"

Zhang Ye smiled and pointed at Fan Yingyun. "You've never had the chance to get to know each other, but since we've all gathered here today, let me introduce you to someone. This is an old friend

who has been fighting alongside me ever since my debut. Her name is Fan Yingyun, and she's also the current leader of my fan club. She's in charge of managing all the other fans too, although she doesn't care about what goes on internally. All she does is lead the group to fight."

When Ha Qiqi heard that, she responded in awe, "Big Saber Bro?"

Zhang Zuo was also dumbfounded. "Big Saber Bro is a female comrade?"

Fan Yingyun shrugged. "Yeah."

A woman?

And she was even such a beautiful woman?

The two of them were very surprised. They'd both witnessed how Big Saber Bro had led the online fan club to slay whoever scolded Zhang Ye. But that dominance was totally mismatched with this very beautiful woman standing before them!

His mother shouted, "Little Ye, Grandpa and Grandma are calling for you."

"Coming, coming!" Zhang Ye said to them, "Have fun talking, guys. I have to leave."

His family.

His friends from Peking University.

His colleagues from Media College.

Zhang Ye greeted his guests one by one, leaving himself with barely any time at all.

On the red carpet, it was finally time for the celebrities to enter the venue.

Everyone turned their attention over there.

The reporters even looked like they were injected with adrenaline!

Dong Shanshan raised her microphone and said, "Let's welcome our celebrity guests for today, Chen Guang and Fan Wenli!"

The couple walked in slowly, all smiles.

Yu Yingyi said loudly, "A warm welcome to our famous director, Li Ke!"

The best Chinese film director, Li Ke, was also here.

Dong Shanshan said, "Let's welcome the famous songstress, Teacher Zhang Xia!"

Zhang Xia was dressed in a gown that looked very ceremonious.

Yu Yingyi said, "Let's welcome the not famous crosstalk actor, but famous actor, Teacher Yao Jiancai and family."

Yao Jiancai and his family were here too.

Dong Shanshan smiled and said, "Please welcome Spring Garden's Xiaodong, Amy, and Li Xiaoxian."

With every person introduced, Zhang Ye stood there and welcomed them with a hug before exchanging a few words.

There were not a lot of celebrity guests with slightly less than 20 names announced before the red carpet event was completed.

However, it wasn't until Dong Shanshan and Yu Yingyi came around to announcing the last person's name that all of the guests, friends, relatives, and reporters at the venue got fired up!

Dong Shanshan smiled and said, "Let's have our last guest walk down the red carpet now!"

Yu Yingyi said in awe, "This guest is quite amazing. It's a foreign friend."

Dong Shanshan looked at everyone. "Can anyone guess who it is?"

A foreigner?

Who was it?

Would a nationalistic young man like Zhang Ye have any foreign friends?

Yu Yingyi said at the top of her voice, "Please welcome international film star—Lillian!"

Watching the redhead walking down slowly on the red carpet!

The media was shocked!

The guests were stunned!

Lillian was here?

She's an international superstar!

Zhang Ye and Lillian had only performed one song together at the Olympics opening ceremony. Was their friendship this strong? Was Zhang Ye so influential that he could invite her?

The reporters snapped shots like crazy!

The atmosphere at the scene was thrust to a high!

This was a guest that pleasantly surprised everyone!

Lillian elegantly strode towards Zhang Ye where she whispered with a laugh, "Hello, fellow smoker."

Chapter 1297: The big wedding (End)

The celebrity guests had all arrived!

It was a star-studded event!

There wasn't a lot of them, but those who were here were all big names!

Soon, the reporters requested that the celebrities separately have their pictures taken with Zhang Ye.

Ning Lan.

Zhang Xia.

Chen Guang.

Lillian.

They had their pictures taken two by two, and it was capped off with a group photo.

Especially for an international superstar like Lillian, the media would definitely give special attention to her. If it weren't for the security lines that demarcated the reporters' activity area, the big group of them would have already rushed up to her. Zhang Ye's junior martial sister, Yang Shu, and several security personnel were over there holding them back. Anyone who came into the restricted area would be pushed back by Yang Shu, leaving quite a few the security personnel casting sidelong glances and wondering who this mysterious bodyguard of Zhang Ye's was. With just a few simple movements from her, it was enough to deduce that she was definitely a very skilled expert. Over there, Zhang Ye had just had two pictures taken with Lillian when his three sisters excitedly came flying over to request a group picture with her. When Lillian learned that these three were Zhang Ye's younger sisters, she naturally obliged.

On the large screen display in the open-air garden,

congratulatory video messages by the different celebrities were being shown as well.

The Heavenly Queen Zhang Yuanqi's video recording appeared onscreen. "Zhang Ye, congratulations on getting married. I'm overseas and can't make it back for your wedding." The video turned to show buildings in the style of Western architecture behind her. "See, I wasn't lying. I really couldn't make it, so here's my blessings to the both of you. Don't pick on me about this, alright?"

Next up was A-list celebrity Huo Dongfang's video. The setting was a hospital. "Teacher Zhang, I injured my leg two days ago while filming and am currently hospitalized. I'm sorry I couldn't attend your wedding, but I'll be discharged in another few days. Let me make it up to you with a meal for my absence. So then, may you be blessed with a child soon, congratulations!"

The celebrities who couldn't make it to the wedding had all sent blessings in their place.

It was almost time.

It was also getting more and more boisterous.

Finally, Shanshan raised her microphone and said, "Ladies and gentlemen."

Yu Yingyi smiled and said, "Our honored guests."

A hush fell over everyone in the open-air garden as they looked at the two wedding ceremony emcees.

The reporters knew that the main event was about to begin and couldn't help but feel invigorated!

Dong Shanshan scanned the crowd and said, "Next, we'll welcoming the most beautiful bride as she makes her appearance. Is everyone looking forward to seeing her?"

"Yes!"

"I'm looking forward to it!"

"Wow!"

"The bride will be coming out soon!"

"Where's the applause!"

Screams!

Applause!

Everyone was cheering unreservedly!

Zhang Ye was also greatly looking forward to it. He did not see Old Wu try on the wedding dress yesterday as she and her family deliberately did not allow him to see it. And this morning, he hadn't seen Old Wu yet either, so he was really curious about how his wife would look in the wedding dress.

Yu Yingyi said loudly, "Now then, let's have the bride make her glamorous appearance!"

The applause was very enthusiastic!

However, there was no sign of any activity on the red carpet.

Dong Shanshan laughed and said, "Let's welcome her again!"

Applause and cheers rang out again, but there was still no one to be seen.

Dong Shanshan was amused. "Oh, it looks like our bride is not so easy to invite out."

Everyone laughed, knowing that this meant there should be some door games 1 happening.

As expected, they immediately saw some people from Wu Zeqing's side of the family appearing on the red carpet. Her best friend, Xin Ya, and her sister, Fat Sis, were walking over with a large group of other women.

Zhang Ye was looking all around for Wu Zeqing. "Where is she?"

But he watched as Xin Ya, who was leading the group, broke into a smile. "Professor Zhang, if you want to see the bride, you'll have to get past us first."

Zhang Ye said with a chuckle, "You have games lined up?"

Xin Ya smiled and said, "Do you know what it means by life has its ups and downs? You've offended me in the past, so it's time that you paid me back for it."

Everyone laughed and jeered.

"It's time for the games!"

"Teacher Zhang, do your best!"

"Zhang'er, don't wuss out!"

"It'll be really shameful if you lose!"

"If you lose, you won't be getting married today!"

Most of the people here had heard about the fight between Peking University and Tsinghua University. The ones who led the groups that fought over the students were Zhang Ye and Xin Ya, respectively. But who could have thought that of these two youngest bright mathematicians of China, one turned out to be Wu Zeqing's husband, while the other was her best friend? This was such a dramatic development, but also what everyone loved seeing. The media also felt very excited!

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Sure, Professor Xin. Please lay down the rules of the game."

Xin Ya nodded in satisfaction. "Alright, I'm gonna say them then."

Zhang Ye said domineeringly, "Sure, I'll accept anything."

Fat Sis raised her fingers and said, "There are three tests."

A niece 2 of Old Wu's said, "Uncle-in-law, if you don't successfully complete the three tests, my aunt will not be coming out. At that

time, you can return to wherever you came from."

Three tests?

So they were really serious about it?

But do you all think that this bro is afraid?

Zhang Ye shrugged and said, "Alright, I accept the challenge."

Xin Ya clapped her hands in glee. "Serve up the Four Treasures of the Study!"

The staff who were helping out immediately went to bring out the items one by one. Clearly, it was prepared in advance. Moreover, Zhang Ye and his studio's staff were not in the know. Obviously, Old Wu's friends and relatives were deliberately doing this to Zhang Ye, and it was also one of the more traditional activities that took place in Chinese weddings. No one was unfamiliar with the practice.

When everyone saw the items being carried out, they were taken aback.

What was this?

What were they going to compete on?

Xin Ya had already opened her mouth to explain. "For the first test, let's compare our literary skills."

Zhang Ye chuckled hard. "Who's competing with me?"

"I'll compete with you," Xin Ya answered with a giggle.

Zhang Ye smiled without saying anything.

Xin Ya smiled and said, "Don't be too happy yet. Have a look at the topic first before you say anything." She then laid out an already written scroll. "For the first test, we're going to compete on — one-syllable essays 3."

One-syllable essays?

What was that?

A lot of people could not understand it.

Only those teachers from Peking University's Chinese Department had an expression of shock on their faces.

Seeing this, Xin Ya explained, "I'll give everyone an example first. This is a one-syllable essay that I wrote earlier. As long as Teacher Zhang can come up with a similar one, it'll be considered my loss."

Zhang Ye sneered and said, "You wrote that?"

"Yeah," Xin Ya said unashamedly.

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes at her. "If you wrote this, I'll swallow this piece of paper whole!"

Xin Ya said, "Don't worry about who wrote it. Are you going to accept the challenge or not?"

Next to them was a projector, a computer, and a large screen. That scroll was very quickly displayed for all to see. When everyone saw it, they gasped!

The original writing was: Xī xī xī, xǐ xī xī. Xí xī xī xī xī xī xǐ, xí xī xī xī xī xǐ xī. Xī xī xī, xī xī xī. Xí xī xī xī xī xī xī. Xī xī xī xī xǐ xī xī.

Its meaning was: The rhinoceros (xī) of the Western (xī) River (xī) loves (xǐ) to play (xīxī). Xi Xi (name: Xí Xī) brings (xī) the rhinoceros (xī) out to the river (xī) every evening (xī xī), and carefully (xī xī) washes (xí xǐ) the rhinoceros (xī). The rhinoceros (xī) sucks up (xī) water from the river (xī) and sprays it playfully (xī xī) onto Xi Xi (name: Xí Xī). Xi Xi (name: Xí Xī) laughs (xī xī) and hopes (xī) that the rhinoceros (xī) will stop (xī) its antics (xī). Unfortunately (xī), the rhinoceros (xī) carried on (xī xī) playfully (xǐ) teasing (xǐ) Xi Xi (name: Xí Xī). The essay depicted a scene where a child named Xi Xi was playing with a mischievous rhino on the Western River.

So this was what a one-syllable essay 4 was?

The entire essay only consisted of words of the same syllable?

And it even had to link up into a coherent story?

What the heck!

Wasn't this too difficult!

Who could come up with a reply against that!

A lot of the media's personnel were floored!

Many of the celebrities saw stars from the array of homophones on the scroll!

They had all seen their fair share of relatives and friends of brides who did their best to make things difficult for a groom. There were cases where they would be made to drink a lot, or eat an apple in an awkward way, as well as many other types of wedding games that were played. But it was the first time they witnessed anyone being put in such a difficult spot by a literary question. These people were indeed learned; they were a bunch of psychos!

Chang Kaige, the dean of the Chinese Department at Peking University, said, "I know this essay. Wasn't it written by Tsinghua University's Old Wang? When did it become your work?"

Old Wang?

The famous language professor at Tsinghua University's Chinese Department?

Xin Ya was not embarrassed by this at all. "In any case, the topic has already been given. It's a one-syllable essay. Let me have a look at my watch." She looked down, then said, "We're getting close to the auspicious hour. Professor Zhang, you can slowly think of how to answer it. Take your time, or you could also have your friends and relatives discuss it with you. But if you don't come up with an answer before the auspicious hour, the bride will not be coming out."

Dong Shanshan laughed from the stage and spoke into the microphone, "The bride's team has made their move. Will the groom be able to accomplish this test?"

Yu Yingyi said with a laugh, "This doesn't look good."

"Zhang'er!"

"Go for it!"

"Think hard!"

"This topic is too difficult!"

"Does anyone have an idea? Help him out."

"This person from Tsinghua is terrible!"

"Any friends from Peking University? Quickly help Teacher Zhang out!"

Zhang Ye's friends and relatives were all shouting.

But faced with this kind of crazily difficult topic, they couldn't offer any help at all. Even people like Peking University's Chang Kaige, Su Na, and Professor Zeng were unable to do anything about it.

Looking at them, Xin Ya gave a smug smile.

The bride's team was also smiling.

But Zhang Ye just looked at the topic and turned to Xin Ya, Fat Sis, and the others with a smile. He said, "Is that it?"

Xin Ya was taken aback. "Ah?"

Old Wu's niece was startled. "What?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "This is the question you're talking about?"

Xin Ya said, "Yes, it's this one. Give it a try if you dare."

Chapter 1298: The big wedding (End, Pt. 2)

One-syllable essays.

In the history of this world, there were very few records of such essays, and as a result, very little that could serve as reference. At most, there were only one or two such works. Unless it was someone who specifically studied classical Chinese, most academics from the Chinese Departments could only take a step back in its presence. Therefore, what was this relaxed attitude that Zhang Ye had? There was even a hint of mockery in his smile? The hearts of Xin Ya and the others were beating wildly. Could this fellow even know how to write an essay like that? Surely not, right?

Xin Ya emphasized, "It has to be written by you."

Zhang Ye lightly acknowledged her.

Xin Ya said, "It won't count if someone else has written it before."

Zhang Ye acknowledged her again.

He was already standing in front of the table and picking up the brush.

Quite a few celebrities gathered around, as did those from Peking University and the SARFT. They all crowded together in curiosity to see how Zhang Ye was going to complete this task.

Xin Ya had her eyes on him.

Fat Sis blinked.

The reporters were feeling doubtful.

Zhang Ye started moving the brush!

He didn't even think about it and was already writing it out. He read as he wrote.

" Jī jī jí jī jì. "

"Jī jī jī, jī jī jī. Jǐ jī jǐ jǐ jí jī jí. Jī jí jí, jī jī jí, jī jì jǐ jì jī jí jì. Jī jì jì jì jī, jī jì jí jī jī jǐ jì. Jī jí jí, jì jí jì, jí jì jǐ jí jī jí jì. Jì jí jì jī jí jí jí, jì jí jǐ jī jì jī, jí jī jī."

Xin Ya was stunned!

The reporters were dumbfounded!

The people from Peking University were staring in shock!

The surrounding guests could barely react!

"H-He really wrote it out?"

"What is its meaning?"

"Is it a correct answer?"

"Can anyone translate it please?"

"Is there a flow to it? Does it link into a story?"

"Surely this is too quick, right? Does he not need to think at all?"

Xin Ya was a mathematics academic, so she couldn't understand what was written here either. She questioned it. "Professor Zhang, you better not have written this randomly. We won't accept it just because the syllables are the same. It has to tell a proper story too!"

Was there a story to it?

Teacher Su Na from Peking University's Chinese Department giggled before helping Zhang Ye translate it. "A flock of chickens (jī jī jī) were clucking (jī jī jī) as they crowded onto a ridge between a water wheel and the river. Several (jǐ) of the chickens were crowded (jǐ jǐ) together (jí) on the rocky (jī) ridge (jí). The water wheel (jī) was turning extremely (jí) fast (jí), and the chickens (jī) were extremely (jí) hungry (jī). They attempted to use their wings (jì) to hit (jī) and catch the fish (jì) in the water to eat. But standing around the water wheel (jī) and thistle (jì) area (jī), they were too far away from the water surface and couldn't reach the fish. So they thought (jì) of using the fast turning (jí) water wheel (jī) to hit (jī) the fish (jì). But the extremely (jí) fast (jí) speed that the water

wheel (jī) was turning at scared (jì) away the fish as they quickly (jí ji) shoaled (jǐ) together (jí) and found a way to escape through the gaps (jí jì) in the rocks(jī). With the fish (jì) all but gone (jí jí jí), the chickens continued being hungry and kept clucking as a result."

She finished translating it!

There was silence throughout the venue!

Damn!

Damn!

Damn!

How could that be?

He really wrote something?

He really made it into a story!

Professor Zeng suddenly applauded. "Good one!"

Chang Kaige also said excitedly, "Good one, Professor Zhang!"

"Beautiful!"

"This is so impressive!"

The people from Peking University got very excited over this!

Professor Zhang had gained a lot of face for Peking University!

Zhang Ye smiled as he looked at Xin Ya and Old Wu's team of people. He pointed at the Xuan paper and said, "Is this what you meant by the test?"

Xin Ya was speechless.

The bride's team was speechless.

Zhang Ye said with a chuckle, "So that was the first test? You even wanted me to get it solved before the auspicious time? I don't think we need to wait that long. I can keep writing them all day and night if you want more of them. Do you believe me, Professor Xin?"

He then picked up the brush again.

Zhang Ye wrote and recited at the same time.

''' Shī shìshíshī shǐ. ' Shí shì shī shì shī shì, shì shī, shì shí shí shī, shì shí shí shì shì shì shī, shí shí, shì shí shī shì shì, shì shí, shì shī shì shì shì, shì shì shì shí shī, shì shǐ shì, shǐ shì shí shī shì shì, shì shí shì shí shī shī, shì shí shì, shí shì shī, shì shǐ shì shì shí shì, shí shì shì, shì shǐ shì shí shí shī shī, shí shí, shǐ shì shì shí shī shī, shí shí shí shī shī. Shì shì shì shì."

Su Na explained, "In a stone (shí) den (shì) was a poet (shī shì) called Mr. (shì) Shi (shī), who was a lion (shī) addict (shì), and had resolved (shì) to eat (shí) ten (shí) lions. He (shì) often (shí shí) went (shì) to the market (shì) to look (shì) for lions (shī). At ten (shí) o'clock (shí), ten lions had just (shì) arrived (shì) at the market. At (shì) that time (shí), Mr. (shì) Shi (shī) had just (shì) arrived (shì) at the market (shì). He saw those ten lions, and using (shì) his trusty (shì) arrows (shǐ), caused (shǐ) the ten lions to die (shì shì). He brought (shí) the corpses (shī) of the ten lions back (shì) to the stone (shí) den (shì). The stone den was damp (shī). He instructed (shǐ) his servants (shì) to wipe (shì) it dry. After the stone den was wiped (shì), he tried (shì) to eat (shí) those ten lions. While (shí) he ate, he realized (shì) that these ten lions were in fact ten stone (shí) lion corpses. Try (shì) to explain (shì) this (shì) matter (shì)!"

Everyone was dumbfounded!

Xin Ya began sweating!

Chen Guang gasped!

Fat Sis could only muster a wry grin!

Everyone was looking at Zhang Ye as though they had seen a ghost!

Then, that was followed by yet another essay.

Zhang Ye wrote and recited at the same time: ''' Rén rén rěn rěn. ' Rén rén rén rén rén rěn rén, rěn rén rén rěn rén rěn rén.[If

everyone (rén rén) were a benevolent (rén) person (rén), they would know how to be patient (rěn) with others (rén). People who know (rèn) benevolence know how to endure (rěn) those who attack (rèn) them.] Rén rén rén rěn rén rén rèn, rén rěn rén rén rén rén rén.[A benevolent (rén) person (rén) endures (rěn) everyone (rén rén) who attacks (rèn) them. If people (rén rén) can endure those who attack them, it means they know benevolence.] Rěn rén rén rén rèn rén rèn, rèn rén rèn rén rèn rén rén.[Benevolent (rén) people (rén) who endure (rěn) others (rén) allow (rèn) themselves (rén) to be attacked (rèn). Only those who are benevolent (rén) would allow (rèn) others (rén) to attack (rèn) them.]"

Xin Ya: "...\$%^&*()*&^%&*()! !"

Then came the fourth one.

It was actually a couplet this time!

Zhang Ye's calligraphy was beautiful and dazzling!

"First line: Qí qī qǐ qí, qí qī qī qì, qī qì qī qí.[Mr. Qi (qí) and his wife (qī) were playing (qǐ) Go (qí). Mr. Qi angered (qì) his wife by cheating (qī). Mrs. Qi walked away (qì), leaving behind seven (qī) stones (qí).]

"Second line: Yī yí yí yǐ, yī yǐ yí yí, yí yí yī yǐ."[Yi (yī) and Yi's aunt (yí) were moving (yí) chairs (yǐ). Yi started leaning (yǐ) against the chairs, making Yi's aunt uncertain (yí). Yi's aunt left (yí) one (yī) of those chairs behind.]

He could do it in essay form?

And even with couplets?

Everyone felt like kneeling!

Zhang Ye was getting ready to write a fifth one.

Xin Ya quickly caught hold of him. "Enough, enough already, don't write any more. Consider this your win."

Zhang Ye didn't know whether to laugh or cry as he said, "What

do you mean by 'consider this my win,' Professor Xin?"

"You've passed the first test, alright?" Xin Ya rolled her eyes as she had no choice but to announce that Zhang Ye had successfully completed this task.

The guests couldn't help but cheer loudly!

"Good!"

"That was nice!"

"Beautifully done, Teacher Zhang!"

"That was so wonderful!"

"Hahahahaha!"

"Professor Zhang is so cool!"

"He's truly deserving of his top literary award!"

"Competing on literary skills, who have we been afraid of?"

Everyone got a kick out of watching this!

Even a lot of the reporters were covered in goosebumps as they felt that this feat was too fucking awesome!

In truth, even Xin Ya was very shocked right now. The others might not know and thought that this was just them putting on a show. Some of them could even have thought that this was prearranged and that the essays were prepared beforehand. But only Xin Ya and Old Wu's team of friends and relatives knew that they had not discussed this with Zhang Ye prior to now. He did not know that they would set him up with this sort of question. Zhang Ye had really answered it on the spot!

What the heck!

Are you on steroids?!

Xin Ya felt very frustrated. In the field of literature, Zhang Ye was indeed too strong!

At the back.

Zhang Ye's classmates were all having a good laugh.

Hu Feifei said, "Zhang'er is too good at showing off. I give him a hundred points!"

Wang He laughed and said, "I give him a thousand points!"

Xiaoqian said, "I freaking give him ten thousand points!"

Old Wang said in amusement, "This fellow is too good at showboating!"

"But only he can show off like that!" Old Zhou was also convinced.

On the stage.

Dong Shanshan announced, "It looks like the outcome of the first test is a pass. Congratulations to Zhang Ye for successfully making it into the semifinals. He's now one step closer to seeing his bride appear."

Yu Yingyi laughed and said, "Now for the second test, what kind of a topic has the bride's team come up with?"

Chapter 1299: The big wedding (If this doesn't end, I'm a scaredy-cat)

He had successfully made it past the first task.

The topic that they had set was crazy difficult!

But Zhang Ye's answer to it was even crazier!

Xin Ya glanced at him. "Are you ready for the second test?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Can I grab a bite first?"

"Have anything you want. You'll need the nutrition." Fat Sis chuckled. "But if you don't clear all three tasks before the time is up, I'm afraid that the bride won't have anything to do with you."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Alright, I'll have a quick bite then."

Across the room, Zhang Ye's grandpa and grandma couldn't be more anxious.

His grandma said, "Could the bride really end up not coming out?"

Zhang Ye's mother said in amusement, "All of these are just games to get everyone in the spirit of things. They are just for fun and laughter, so how could they possibly not let my daughter-in-law come out?"

His father said, "Let's just watch the festivities."

His grandma heaved a sigh of relief. "That's better, that's better."

Everyone knew that this was just to provide entertainment.

The reporters knew this.

The guests knew it as well.

As an example, for the first task that was given, the bride's team did not actually think that Zhang Ye could successfully complete it. They had intended to stump him with the opening task, and if he

could not answer it, all he would have to do was hand out some red packets or say a few nice words to plead with them and they would have allowed him to skip it and go directly to the second task. All this was done deliberately to put him in a difficult situation, as well as an attempt to earn some red packets from him. But to everyone's surprise, Zhang Ye actually answered a question like that without even breaking a sweat. So how could the bride's team just leave it at that? All of them were trying to restrain themselves as they prepared to give Zhang Ye something "good" next.

Otherwise, it would look too embarrassing.

Yet anyone who knew Zhang Ye would know that this fellow was naturally a very competitive person.

Get him to throw in the towel?

That would be impossible!

After a quick bite, Zhang Ye was full. "I'm good."

Xin Ya smiled. "Then can we give the next test?"

Zhang Ye gave a calm smile. "Come, I'm ready to continue."

A hint of malevolence shone in Xin Ya's eyes as she said, "So, the second test will consist of three questions. We will give the keywords and you will have to write and compose a song on the spot using them. After that, you will be required to sing it for everyone here."

Zhang Ye said in a speechless manner, "Three questions? Then you should consider that three different tests, shouldn't you?"

Fat Sis harrumphed. "We will count it as only one test."

Zhang Ye threw up his hands. "Whatever, there's nothing I can say to that."

Everyone laughed.

The reporters were also excited!

Composing songs?

And there would even be three of them?

Were they going to get to hear a new song from Zhang Ye?

But quite a few musicians who were present exchanged glances with one another when they heard that. Write a song spontaneously? It was easier said than done. Even composing a song on their own would be a problem, much less composing a song based on a subject given by others. Among the singer-songwriters in the industry, how many of them could do it?

Xin Ya even added, "On top of that, the requirements for you to clear this test will be: First, it has to match the subject that we give you. Second, you cannot just sing whatever; it has to be good. It will only count if at least 95% of the people here think it's good. It won't pass if the song is not well-written either."

Damn!

Wasn't this as good as trying to finish him off?!

Chen Guang and Fan Wenli were left speechless!

Zhang Xia didn't know whether to laugh or cry!

Ning Lan was already preparing to have a laugh at Zhang Ye's expense!

It was already very difficult writing a song, and even more so if it had to be written in accordance with a subject. But now, they were basically asking him to compose a classic! They wanted him to write a song that almost everyone would approve of? How could that be possible!

Xin Ya said, "Of course, you can also get help from your friends and relatives."

Chen Guang, Zhang Xia, Xiaodong, Amy, and a few others were all involved in music, so they might be able to offer some ideas.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "So what's the subject?"

Old Wu's niece said, "For the first question, we know that Uncle-in-law has written many poems, right?"

Zhang Ye smile and said, "Yes, I've written quite a few before."

The bride's team had clearly discussed it beforehand.

Fat Sis said with an evil laugh, "Then we want you to use one of your poems to write a song for our Zeqing."

Everyone was stunned.

A poem?

How could he do that!

Zhang Ye also fell silent for a moment.

Xin Ya laughed and said, "Well, can you?"

Zhang Ye grinned. "Sure."

He walked up to the front. Looking at the instruments placed there, there was a piano, a drum set, and a guitar. He bent down and chose the acoustic guitar, then tuned it.

Xin Ya was stunned.

Fan Wenli was dumbfounded.

Don't you need to think about it first?

Don't you have to conceptualize something first?

The guitar sounded as Zhang Ye started strumming. It sounded like a ballad!

A soothing melody played!

It filled the air!

"When you are old and grey and full of sleep.

"When you are old and unable to walk, nodding off by the fireplace, reminiscing your youth.

"How many loved your moments of glad grace, "and loved your

beauty with love false or true.

"But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you, "And loved the sorrows of your changing face."

It was quiet in the garden!

Everyone was listening, mesmerized!

A lot of people had been moved by it!

It was that poem!

"When You Are Old"!

It was the poem Zhang Ye used to announce his engagement on Weibo, the poem that went viral online!

He really could sing it!

He managed to arrange that poem into a song!

Zhang Ye kept singing.

"When you are old, with eyes draping, "and lights appearing dim.

"The winds brings to me,

"news about you.

"It turns into a song in my heart."

The song was over!

Applause broke out instantly!

The more than a 100 spectating reporters were also cheering loudly!

It was fantastic!

How very nice!

This song was so memorable for a wedding!

Chen Guang gave it the thumbs up!

Zhang Xia also gave it the thumbs up!

A lot of people were impressed once again!

Zhang Ye put the guitar down and said with a smile, "This should do it, right?"

The applause had already made it clear. This song was great. If it wasn't good, then there wouldn't be many songs that were considered good!

Xin Ya rolled her eyes. "This is only the first song. The subject for the second song is 'love song.'"

A love song?

That should be easy!

But very quickly, Fat Sis added, "By love song, we don't mean the genre. What we want is a song that revolves around the words 'love song' to be written for Zeqing, haha."

Using the words "love song" to write a love song?

What kind of a topic was this!

The topics were really getting more and more tricky!

Everyone was left dizzy at these topics!

But Zhang Ye simply chuckled at that. This time, he sat down in front of the piano. Without any hesitation again, the melody was already playing. He sang out clearly: "This piece is a simple little love song.

"It sings of the innocence in our hearts.

"I think I'm perfect for

"being a singer.

"Our youth drifts along in the wind.

"You know, even if the whole city were torn down by storms, I would still embrace you.

"I can't take it, waiting for you to come back, so I wrote down the

unbearable lament and mourning that I feel.

"Even if the whole world were kidnapped by loneliness, I wouldn't run away.

"It's inescapable; we'll all end up old someday, so I wrote down the nostalgia mixed with time and the piano."

This song was called "A Little Love Song."

Zhang Ye sang it without a blemish.

"Bravo!"

"Great singing!"

"That was fantastic!"

"Incredible!"

"Zhang Ye is indeed Zhang Ye!"

"Hahahaha, awesome!"

"I'm kneeling!"

"Boss Zhang is such a genius!"

Xin Ya was getting anxious. "For the third question, aren't you holding a Chinese style ceremony? So we require you to write a song related to a bridal sedan. No, wait. A bridal sedan will be too simple. Let's see you write a song about the wedding veil!"

A wedding veil?

The hanging cloth that covered the bride's face?

What the fuck? When has there ever been a song about a wedding veil!

Can the topics get any stranger than this!

Everyone was blindsided!

However, Zhang Ye opened his mouth and sang.

He mischievously played the piano.

"Raise your wedding veil for me.

"Let me look at your eyebrows.

"They are so fine and so long.

"Like the crescent moon atop the trees.

"They are so fine and so long.

"Like the crescent moon atop the trees."

A wedding veil?

So you could write a song with that too?!

Everyone was shocked!

Subconsciously, a lot of them were already following the beat!

Some people even started dancing to it!

Zhang Ye laughed as he sang.

"Raise your wedding veil for me.

"Let me look at your eyes.

"They are so bright and so clear.

"Like the ripples in a pond.

"They are so bright and so clear.

"Like the ripples in a pond."

Old Wu's team of friends and relatives broke down!

You can even do that?

You can even do it like that?

Oh my God!

You win!

Zhang Ye, you win!

Chapter 1300: The big wedding (Guess I'm a scaredy-cat)

Onstage.

Dong Shanshan shouted, "Does everyone think that the songs are great?"

"They're great!"

"Great!"

"There's no problems!"

"All of them pass!"

Yu Yingyi laughed and said, "Congratulations to Zhang Ye again on passing the second test."

Zhang Ye cockily said with clasped hands, "Please don't laugh at my performance."

The reporters were all amused!

The guests were enjoying themselves to the fullest!

Old Wu's team of friends and relatives were once again left kneeling!

The three consecutive song topics that were extremely tricky to answer had all been answered by Zhang Ye without a stumble. He could even write a song about something as nonsensical as a wedding veil. Moreover, every song fit its topic, and every one of them was fantastic. This was obviously not something that a normal person could achieve. Of all the songwriters in the show business, none of them could do it to such great effect. This was Zhang Ye's skill, and there wasn't a second person you could find in the entertainment circle who could do the same!

Those who were on the bride's team finally realized it. To hope that such topics would make things difficult for Zhang Ye was

clearly impossible. It was a good thing that they still had something up their sleeves.

Xin Ya had no other choice.

Fat Sis gave her a glance.

Old Wu's two nephews and one niece were getting anxious.

"It's time for the big one!"

"Auntie Xin!"

"Bring it on!"

"It's the final test!"

Xin Ya nodded. "Alright, leave it to me!"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "What move do you have left? Come at me!"

Xin Ya sneered and harrumphed up onto the stage. She took the microphone from Yu Yingyi and turned around, then suddenly broke out into laughter. "Dear guests, friends, and relatives. Before I bring up the topic for the third test, let me say a few words first. I've known Old Wu for many years now, with our friendship dating back to childhood, and we're best friends. It's her big day today, so I'm very happy for her. Before the wedding, I asked her a question. Actually, this was to sound something out from her. I asked her what was something that would be difficult for someone like Zhang Ye? Old Wu told me that there weren't a lot of things that Zhang Ye couldn't do. He is the type who is straightforward and decisive, so most things do not pose a problem to him. But I told her that she had to give me something anyway. Old Wu gave it some thought and finally told me that it would surely be very difficult to get Zhang Ye to say 'I love you' to her."

Your sister!

Zhang Ye chuckled, "Pfft!"

The crowd jeered.

"He hasn't even said 'I love you'?"

"Hahaha, Teacher Zhang, you're so terrible!"

"This won't do!"

Xin Ya calmed the crowd down and helped put in a word for Zhang Ye. "Actually, I've also known Zhang Ye for quite some time now. I know what he and Old Wu are like. They're both people who don't really know how to put their feelings into words. If you want them to both say 'I love you' to each other, that is truly an insurmountable task."

His father nodded.

His mother chuckled.

He was their son, so of course they understood this quite well.

Xin Ya then said, "But I refuse to accept that. Old Wu warned me not to put Zhang Ye in a bind. That's fine, I'll just put it in a different way. For the topic of the third test—" She looked at Zhang Ye. "—since we're both in the field of mathematics, why don't you use the language of math to express your love for Old Wu?"

Zhang Ye responded with a helpless grin.

The guests roared!

"Come on!"

"Teacher Zhang, do it!"

"Right, express it, express your love!"

"Saying 'I love you' in the language of math does sound pretty good!"

There was no difficulty for this test at all!

The language of math?

Everyone thought, what language could math have?

It would have to be 520 1 ! That, or 521 2 !

Only these two numbers were homonyms for expressing love!

But if he were to use that, then that wouldn't actually be any different from him saying "I love you." It was as good as making him say it directly!

But Zhang Ye just smiled without saying anything.

Fat Sis said, "Zhang'er, the bride won't be coming out if you don't say it."

Old Wu's niece urged, "Heehee, hurry up, Uncle-in-law! Speak in the language of math; say it using math!"

This was too difficult for Zhang Ye. He really couldn't say those words, not even if it was 520 or 521.

At this moment, Zhang Ye remembered a story. It was a classic story from his previous world: The mathematician Descartes met 18-year-old Princess Christina of Sweden. Being inseparable, they soon developed feelings for each other. When the king found out, he flew into a rage and immediately ordered the execution of Descartes. After Princess Christina pleaded with her father, the king sent him back to France and placed his daughter in confinement. Not long after Descartes returned to France, he became seriously ill. He wrote letters to the princess, but because of the king's meddling, Christina never received any of them. After Descartes sent out the 13th letter, he passed away. The last letter contained only a short equation. The king could not understand it and somewhat felt that it might not always be sweet nothings between the two. So he summoned all the mathematicians in the city to the palace to study it, but no one could decipher it. The king couldn't bear to see his daughter always unhappy. Therefore, he handed the letter over to the sullen Christina. When the princess saw it, she immediately understood what her lover was saying. She knew that he still loved her as ever.

Of course, that was only a story.

But that famous equation in the story really existed.

Xin Ya stared at him. "Are you going to say it or what?"

Fat Sis said, "Zhang'er, don't feel shy about it."

The language of math?

To express his love?

Zhang Ye smiled and went onstage. He picked up a pen and a piece of paper, then wrote on it: $r = a(1 - \sin\theta)$

No one understood what it meant!

A lot of people were taken aback!

What is this?

What kind of an answer is this?

Shouldn't it be 520 or 521? Why did it become an equation instead?

Xin Ya was also confused. "Zhang Ye, what is this?"

Zhang Ye said, "That is what I want to say to Old Wu."

Xin Ya was floored. "How could there be anything to say to her!"

"That's because you don't understand it," Zhang Ye said calmly.

The bride's team was having none of it.

"You can't do it like that."

"You're just throwing random things at us."

"How can your answer be a formula?"

"There's nothing to it!"

"Is it a homonym? But it doesn't look like it!"

The reporters were puzzled.

The guests could not understand.

A few of the professors from Peking University's Math Department also came forward.

Dean Pan Yang said, "Let me have a look."

Xin Ya was leaning over to study the equation. "What the heck is this? Some kind of code?"

Pan Yang was also confused by it. "This formula doesn't mean anything, does it?" He picked up a pen and tried to work it out, then put it back down and shook his head. "It really doesn't mean a thing."

A Peking University teacher looked over. "Professor Zhang, just what kind of a formula is this?"

All of a sudden, Xin Ya looked startled. "Wait! This—where's a computer?"

Pan Yang pointed. "It's over by the stage."

Xin Ya took the equation and marched over. Then she typed a series of inputs!

Looking at the large screen display, everyone could see what Xin Ya was doing, but they could not understand why she was doing it.

However, the Peking University teachers could.

"What?"

"Polar coordinates?"

"Is she going to draw it?"

"What use is there in graphing the equation?"

But several minutes later!

When $r = a(1 - \sin\theta)$ got represented as a graph and shown onscreen, everyone present at the ceremony burst out in a loud exclamation!

"Oh my God!"

"What am I seeing?"

"This is so beautiful!"

"Fuck, this is so amazing!"

"This, this—"

Xin Ya was dumbfounded!

Pan Yang looked shaken to his core!

Fat Sis covered her mouth in shock!

The reporters were all screaming!

All of the guests were astonished!

This equation that couldn't be any simpler was actually in the shape of a heart!

It was an astonishing heart!

"It could even be done like this?"

"Is this what the language of math can do?"

"So this is what Zhang Ye wants to say to his wife?"

"This is too romantic!"

"So it's not only 520 that can be expressed through math!"

"This is so awesome!"

For a moment, everyone's eyes were on Zhang Ye!

He didn't know how to say "I love you."

Nor was he one to whisper sweet nothings.

In some ways, Zhang Ye's character was actually closer to that of a strict mathematician.

$$r = a(1 - \sin\theta)$$

This was Zhang Ye's code word to his wife!

This was the greatest romance of a mathematician!

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